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BETWEEN THE EMPIRES
Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE
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Preface

The papers collected in this volume resulted from an international conference held at the University of Texas at Austin, April 3–6, 2003. The conference was to explore the period between roughly the fourth century BCE and the fifth century CE, a period that saw unparalleled developments within the Indian subcontinent, developments that defined classical Indian culture and society. Shortly prior to this period occurred the first invasions of India by foreign military forces (those of Persians under Darius and of the Greeks under Alexander), bringing with them an opening to the West. This period saw the establishment of the overland silk road to China and the expansion of maritime trade, which established contacts with East Asia. Buddhism spread to the east, intensifying the cultural interaction between East and South Asia. Developments within the Indian subcontinent included the extensive use of writing and the flowering of literature and scholarship: grammar, philosophy, law, political science, epics, drama, poetics, art, architecture, and so on. Out of this period came many of the basic texts of Indian learning and some of the basic features of Indian culture.

We called the conference *Between the Empires*, because the heart of the period falls between the decline of the first major Indian empire, that of the Mauryas (whose last king died in the early second century BCE), and the rise of the Gupta Empire (beginning in the fourth century CE). The aim of the conference was to bring together scholars pursuing advanced research relating to this period and to provide them the opportunity to interact with each other over a two- or three-day period. The participants included archeologists, art historians, numismatists, historians, experts in literature, law, and linguistics, philosophers, and historians of religion. The conference participants were asked to send their papers before the meeting so that they could be distributed to all the participants. This eliminated the time-consuming process of reading the papers during the meeting. Rather, each participant introduced her or his paper within ten minutes, thereby leaving as much time as possible for discussion, debate, and the exchange of ideas. This was an opportunity for scholars from diverse fields to interact with one another and to profit by the insights of those in other fields. A transcript of the vigorous and fruitful discussions that followed each summary is available at: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/southasia/empires/conferencepapers.

A few of the scholars invited could not attend due to personal and professional reasons. Two of their papers, those of Dilip K. Chakrabarti and J. Mark Kenoyer, are included in this volume. A few of the participants were unable to provide papers for this volume. My own paper was not distributed at the conference and is included to provide an overview of the developments in the legal literature during this period.

This volume contains a rich collection of serious and often groundbreaking studies of a variety of cultural and historical issues relating to this seminal period of South Asian history. Yet we were unable to cover everything; many important topics are not covered mostly because experts in those areas were unable to participate in the

conference. We do not have studies, for example, on early Buddhism, Aśokan inscriptions, writing systems, foreign invasions and immigration, works on politics and governance (the *Arthaśāstra*, for example), drama, belles lettres (*kāvya*), or developments in technology, mathematics, and other sciences. Nevertheless, this volume and the scholarship contained therein, we hope, will become a standard reference for scholars and students interested in the history and culture of ancient South Asia.

We also organized a graduate seminar on the topic *Between the Empires* during the spring semester of 2003, attended by a large group of our graduate students and faculty. The seminar participants read most of the papers written for the conference, as well as other readings suggested by the authors of those papers. The students discussed the papers among themselves, wrote their own studies of this period, and participated in discussions with the conference participants. We appreciate the added vigor that the interest and energy of these students brought to the conference.

Many individuals assisted in the planning and execution of the conference. My colleagues Joel Brereton, Janice Leoshko, Martha Selby, and Cynthia Talbot were on the planning committee and assisted in every phase of the conference; as did our faculty colleagues Oliver Freiberger and Edeltraud Harzer. Richard Lariviere, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, generously funded the conference. Members of our staff who contributed in a variety of ways to the success of the conference include Sandra Paschall, Jeannie Cortez, Liliana Merubia, and Eduardo Contreras. Jarrod Whitaker led a large group of our graduate students who helped with the logistics. Matthew Sayers is responsible for producing the camera-ready copy of this volume, and Mark McClish prepared the Index. I want to thank Matthew in a special way for his extraordinary diligence and good humor in formatting this very complex text and in dealing with the idiosyncrasies of seventeen authors and an impatient editor. My wife, Suman, as usual was a wonderful host during the "after hours" of the conference. To all of them, a heartfelt thanks. And to all of them and to the wonderful participants at the conference this book is dedicated.

Contents

Abbreviations

AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
Abhidh-k-bh(P)	Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*
ĀcS	*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*
ĀDhP	*Āpaddharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*
AK	*Amarakośa*
AngN	*Anguttara Nikāya*
ĀnSS	*Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series*
ĀpDh	*Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*
ĀpG	*Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra*
AŚ	*Arthaśāstra*
ĀśG	*Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra*
AV	*Atharva Veda*
BĀU	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
BDh	*Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*
BI	Bibliotheca Indica
BORI	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
BP	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*
BrP	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*
BSS	Bombay Sanskrit Series
BŚS	*Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*
ChU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
CSS	Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series
DDhP	*Dānadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*
GDh	*Gautama Dharmasūtra*
GG	*Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra*
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series
HV	*Harivaṃśa*
IIJ	*Indo-Iranian Journal*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
KA	Kauṭilīya's *Arthaśāstra*
KapS	*Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha Saṃhitā*
KB	*Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*
KS	*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā*
KSS	Kāśī Sanskrit Series
KSū	*Kāma Sūtra*
JB	*Jaimanīya Brāhmaṇa*
MadhK(deJ)	Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ*
MajN	*Majjhima Nikāya*

MBh	*Mahābhārata*
MDh	*Mānava Dharmaśāstra*
MDhP	*Mokṣadharmaparvan*
MP	*Matsya Purāṇa*
MS	*Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*
OI	Oriental Institute
Pāṇ	Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*
PB	*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*
PTS	Pali Text Society
Ram	*Rāmāyaṇa*
RDhP	*Rājadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*
ṚV	*Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
SBH	Sacred Books of the Hindus
ŚBK	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Kāṇva
ŚBM	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Mādhyaṃdina
SK	*Sāṃkhya Kārikā*
ŚP	*Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*
ŚŚS	*Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā*
VaDh	*Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*
VajS	*Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*
VāP	*Vāyu Purāṇa*
VinP	*Vinaya Piṭaka*
ViP	*Viṣṇu Purāṇa*
VMBh	Patañjali, (*Vyākaraṇa-*)*Mahābhāṣya*
VS	*Viṣṇu Smṛti*
Vt	*Vārttika* on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*
Vy	*Vyomavatī* of Vyomaśivācārya
WZKS	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*
YBh	*Yoga Bhāṣya*
YD	*Yuktidīpikā*
YDh	*Yājñavalkya Dharmaśāstra*
YMt	Mitākṣarā's commentary of Vijñāneśvara on *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*
YP	*Yuga Purāṇa*
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

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BETWEEN THE EMPIRES

1

Relating History to the Land

Urban Centers, Geographical Units, and Trade Routes in the Gangetic and Central India of circa 200 BCE

Dilip K. Chakrabarti

In the Gangetic plain the area of the present study extends from the Chattagram or Chittagong coast in the east to the Agra-Mathura region in the west, including a slice of the Nepalese Terai covering the sites of Lumbini and Tilaura Kot. In central India the study-area comprises Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The purpose of this chapter is primarily to discuss the interrelationship between their early historic urban centers, geographical units of the period, and trade routes which passed through them. In the course of my discussion I shall also refer to the relevant archaeological situations of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand. This is a historical geographical exercise based essentially on my field-studies since 1981 (Chakrabarti 1992, 1993, 2001a, forthcoming; Chakrabarti, Tewari and Singh 2000, forthcoming-a, forthcoming-b.; Chakrabarti et al 2001, 2002, forthcoming). I shall put forward only my understanding of the situation.

BENGAL

Here "Bengal" means both Bangladesh and West Bengal, and covers the following ancient geographical units (Sen 1942): Samatata, Pundravarddhana, Vanga, Suhma, Uttara Radha, Dakshina Radha, and Gauda. The generally accepted definitions of these units are: Samatata = the trans-Meghna area of the Comilla-Mainamati area of Bangladesh; Pundravarddhana = Barind or the old alluvial tract of the northern districts of Bangladesh and West Bengal; Vanga = the deltaic region between the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi and the Dhaka-Vikrampur section of Bangladesh; Suhma = the coastal tract of the West Bengal district of Midnapur; Uttara Radha = parts of Birbhum district and the whole of Burdwan/Barddhaman district (both in West Bengal); Dakshina Radha = the whole of Bankura district and the noncoastal Midnapur district (West Bengal); Gauda = the whole of Murshidabad district and parts of Birbhum district (West Bengal).

Wari-Bateshwar or Ptolemy's Souanagoura

The urban site which lies furthest to the east in the Gangetic valley is Wari-Bateshwar which lies in the fringe of a lateritic Pleistocene formation called the Madhupur Garh and overlooks the old course of the Brahmaputra. The present course of the Brahmaputra in Bangladesh, known as the Jamuna, flows considerably to the west of this area and meets the Padma, which became increasingly significant as an eastern channel of the Ganga from the twelfth century CE onward. The Bhagirathi or the western arm of the Ganga flowing through West Bengal was the important channel in the earlier period. The Brahmaputra moved into its present channel only about 200 years ago. The old Brahmaputra course joins the Meghna channel a few kilometers to the south of Wari-Bateshwar. On the whole, its location in the fringe of a flood-free Pleistocene formation with ready access to the Brahmaputra and Meghna channels must have been the basic geographical factor behind its growth in the two neighboring villages of Wari and Bateshwar in the present Narsingdi district of Bangladesh. The site itself has a core of about 1.5 sq km which is surrounded by a mud rampart and a ditch, but there are occupational traces outside the fortified area. Both on the basis of the finds made by Hanif and Habibullah Pathan, a father-son team of local antiquarians, and a limited field-study, the true early historical significance of the site was established in 1992 (Chakrabarti 1992: 56–60, 64–66) and it was further argued that it was an important internal and external trade center of the early historic period. The dimensions of this trade included, internally, a contact with Assam or the upper part of the Brahmaputra valley, and externally, a link with both southeast Asia and the Roman world. On the basis of a reference in the section 63 of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Schoff 1974: 47–48), it was claimed that "the Wari-Bateshwar area was possibly an entrepot which had a local manufacturing importance of its own and imported the products of Assam along the Brahmaputra before forwarding this to the Roman trade which eventually went from here to the Malayan peninsula" (Chakrabarti 1992: 65). The beginning of the site was considered "unlikely to be later than 200 BCE" but in all probability a couple of centuries earlier. In a later publication (Chakrabarti 1997) Wari-Bateshwar was identified with "Souanagoura," which figures in Ptolemy's list of towns of trans-Gangetic India (Sastri 1927: 224–225, 228). The two pieces of knobbed copper bowls were also pointed out as a direct evidence of southeast Asiatic contact of the site in the late centuries BCE (Basa and Rahman 1998).

Wari-Bateshwar was excavated in 2000 by S. S. M. Rahman (Haque, Rahman and Ahsan 2001), confirming all the earlier observations based on the location of the site and the study of surface antiquities, and raising new issues. The occupational depth varies between 1.40 meters and 2 meters and apparently comprises material only of the early historic period. The excavated pottery includes Rouletted Ware which is linked with the Indo-Roman trade, Northern Black Polished Ware (NBP), Black-slipped Ware, Knobbed Ware, and ordinary dull red ware of the period with or without polish. The find of iron slag and related material conclusively shows that the site and its adjacent area practiced iron-smelting, just as the find of manufacturing debris and raw materials of semi-precious stone and glass beads confirms that it was producing stone and glass beads. Regarding the glass beads, S. S. M. Rahman (2001) makes an important point. He underlines the significance of the occurrence of "sandwiched glass beads," "gold-foil glass beads," and "Indo-Pacific monochrome drawn glass beads" at Wari-Bateshwar. Citing the opinion of Peter Francis, a bead specialist, he points out that sandwiched glass beads came from the Mediterranean, specifically Egypt, and that the technique of gold-foil glass beads could be originally Roman in origin. The "Indo-Pacific monochrome drawn glass beads" are reputedly of Tamil Nadu origin and carried from there to other parts of south Asia and southeast Asia during the early historic period. There are three calibrated C-14 dates from the site, all falling around the middle of the fifth century BCE (personal information from S. S. M. Rahman).

Wari-Bateshwar stll remains to be extensively excavated, with published section-drawings and evidence of periodization in the early historic context itself. However, the evidence obtained so far is definitive and establishes the general historical position of the site. Its location and C-14 chronology carry a number of implications, all rather significant in the context of early historic India. First, its date of the mid-fifth century BCE pushes it in the direction of the Majajanapada period with a mid-point of the sixth century BCE (for a recent review of this period, Chakrabarti 2000). This date from the NBP-bearing level at the site conclusively shows that the NBP in Bengal has nothing to do with the Mauryan expansion in the region. Second, as is well known, there are references to an early tradition of maritime links with southeast Asia in the *Jatakas*. The general fifth-century BCE date from a site with proven southeast Asiatic contacts like Wari-Bateshwar suggests that there may be some truth in this tradition. Third, of which ancient geographical unit was Wari-Bateshwar a part—Vanga, or Samatata? The main focus of Vanga has been taken to range from the eastern bank of the Bhagirathi to the Vikrampur area of modern Dhaka or roughly the area where the joint stream of the Padma and the modern course of Brahmaputra meets the Meghna. Samatata is usually taken to mean the trans-Meghna segment of modern Bangladesh, with the modern Comilla-Mainamati area as its focus. The term occurs for the first time in the famous Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta in the early fourth century CE. Technically, Wari-Bateshwar is not in the trans-Meghna region but very close to it on its east bank. It certainly is outside the area suggested for Vanga. It appears that Wari-Bateshwar belongs to the Samatata tract. Till now this is the only early historic site reported from this tract, but the very fact that it existed as early as the mid-fifth century BCE in this part of Bangladesh shows that the geographical unit of Samatata, although inscriptionally documented only in the fourth century CE, has a much earlier antiquity which touches the Mahajanapada period. Secondly, on the basis of the fact that Wari-Bateshwar is a fortified settlement, we argue that in addition to its character as a manufacturing and trading center, it was also an administrative center and most likely to be the ancient capital of the Samatata region. Currently the site stands isolated, but one suspects that careful explorations in the area, especially along the course of the old Brahmaputra, will bring to light more early historic sites. The possibility of such finds is also strong in the Comilla-Mainamati and Chattagram sectors. The direct map-distance between Wari-Bateshwar and Chittagong coast is less than 200 km, and geographically it is most unlikely that this distance could not be covered by influence from Wari-Bateshwar.

The Old Alluvium of Northern Bengal or the Barind Tract

Mahasthangarh or Ancient Pundranagara

In the case of Wari-Bateshwar we do not have its ancient name except its suggested Ptolemy version of Souanagoura. In the case of Mahasthangarh which is a much larger site with many inscriptional and textual references, the ancient name is clear—Pundranagara, the capital of the ancient geographical area of Pundravarddhana, the area of Varendra-bhumi or the modern Barind tract which comprises the northern districts of both Bangladesh and West Bengal. As a *Bhukti* or administrative province of the Gupta Empire and later kingdoms, Pundravarddhana was a larger territory, including a large segment of even southern West Bengal. The archaeological focus is also much stronger in this case because this has been excavated for many years, and Rahman's explorations in the Bagura district (Rahman 2000) where it is located have brought out other NBP sites. As a site, Mahasthangarh cannot be called isolated. It covers about 185 hectares (about 457 acres), most of it within a quadrangular mud rampart. The C-14 dates from the site have been used to argue that it was in existence in the fourth century BCE. This date is about hundred years later than the date of Wari-Bateshwar, which we consider to be very unlikely. If the date of the NBP at War-Bateshwar is mid-fifth century BCE, there is really no reason why its date should be later at Mahasthangarh, which happens to be the larger and apparently more important site of the two. Theoretically, Mahasthangarh also should be a *Mahajanapada*-period site. Rahman's excavations (Rahman 2000) of the Govinda Bhita sector of Mahasthangarh yielded 1.42 meters of NBP deposit, beginning in the lowest occupational layer (8) and continuing up to the occupational layer (4). Nothing conclusive can be said, but in view of the probability that the beginning of the NBP in the Ganges delta of Bengal cannot be significantly later than its date in the upper segments of the valley, which currently hovers between 800 and 700 BCE, a fifth-century BCE date for the beginning of the early historic occupation at Mahasthangarh is very much within the bounds of probability. It is also important to note that Rahman's layer (7) contains three sherds of Rouletted Ware, a pottery found at Wari-Bateshwar as well.

Mahasthangarh is located on the west bank of the Karatoya river, which was a major river up to the twelfth century CE. Now the Karatoya joins the new Brahmaputra channel or "Jamuna." Although a map shows the Karatoya going independently to the sea (Alam and Salles 2001: fig. 7) one is not sure which channel was joined by the Karatoya in the ancient context—an earlier version of the Padma channel or the old course of the Brahmaputra? The issue is uncertain, but the very fact that Mahasthan was located on the Karatoya suggests that one of its traditional linkages was with the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. Second, it was connected with the Barind sector of West Bengal through the modern Hili area, and from the Barind sector of West Bengal there were routes both to the Bhagirathis sector of West Bengal and the middle Ganga plain of Bihar. On the basis of a study of the historical linkages of the Barind tract, of which Mahasthangarh was a part, I summarized the situation:

> The traditional historical linkages of the Barind tract (whether on the Bangladeshi side or Indian side) . . . are the following: the Koshi plain and beyond; West Bengal from Murshidabad to the coast; a shorter access to the Bhagirathi mouth via the modern Jessore area; the *Tarai* areas of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar; Tibet through Bhutan and the Choombi valley in Sikkim; north Assam plain along the Brahmaputra beyond the Cooch Behar funnel and from north Assam to north Burma via the Hookang valley; and finally, the Samatata tract up to Chittagong coast through which there was a route via Akyab to Prome, a major centre of early history in Burma. The writ of Mahasthangarh as the administrative centre of *Pundravarddhana-Bhukti* ran far and wide—in fact, much wider than we in our ignorance of the geopolitical compulsions of south Asian history are willing to concede. (Chakrabarti 2001b: xxvi)

Bangarh or Ancient Kotivarsha and the Problem of Kandaran

It was the administrative center of a division called Kotivarsha-Vishaya, itself part of the wider administrative unit of Pundravarddhana-Bhukti, which had Mahasthangarh as its capital. Located on the bank of the Purnabhava, the site has its core in the form of a citadel surrounded by mud ramparts (area about 25 hectares) which date from the earliest phase of the site. This earliest phase remains uncertain because the excavations published in 1948 (Goswami 1948) could not reach the natural soil. A pre-Mauryan level is clearly probable.

This site has to be considered along with Kandaran, a neighboring site from where NBP was reported by a fellow-worker (Jha 1990–91). He found the site covering three modern villages and thus it has to be considered a major site. My own exploration of the site did not yield NBP, but Kushan-period terracottas are there, and there is no reason to doubt the NBP report. I am not sure, of course, of the reported fortification and moat at this site. In this sector I, thus, postulate two major early historic centers, one around Bangarh and another around Kandaran. The latter was linked to the route which came from the Pataliputra area following the northern bank of the Ganga toward Mahasthangarh, and in this sector the route passed from Kandaran to Bangarh and from Bangarh via modern Hili and Pachbibi to Mahasthangarh.

The Bhagirathi Belt and the Western Part of West Bengal

Till circa twelfth century, the Bhagirathi was the main flow of the Ganga, although between modern Calcutta and Sagar Island at the mouth of the estuary, the river moved in a different channel to the east. The original course of the Ganga in this section is known as Adi Ganga, which is still traceable and considered holy. Between Dumdum in the northern outskirts of Calcutta and Sagar Island there is a series of places which have sporadically yielded sophisticated terracottas, NBP, Rouletted Ware, silver punch-marked and other coins, semiprecious stone beads, objects of ivory, etc. in large quantities. These places are generally unexcavated, but excavations at Dumdum (personal information from Samir Mukhopadhyay) have revealed an archaeological sequence going back at least to the third century BCE, if not before. Tentatively, mainly

on the basis of the quantity and sophistication of antiquities from them, all these places may be identified as early historic urban centers. I am willing to give urban status to seven early historic sites which lie between Dumdum and Sagar Island: Dumdum, Atghara, Chhatrabhog-Khari, Pakurtala, Mandirtala, Harinarayanpur, and Deulpota-Rayer Chak (Chakrabarti 2001a: chapter 4). All these sites lie on the bank of the old channel of the Bhagirathi and represent a kind of urban conurbation of circa second century BCE, the only conurbation of the kind that I can think of in the context of early historic India.

The area which lies immediately to the east of this section in West Bengal is crisscrossed by a number of moribund or live river channels. The most significant early historic site of the region, Chandraketugarh, is located near one these channels, Bidyadhari.

Chandraketugarh

Known since the early twentieth century, this fortified site of about 1 km square and with substantive traces of occupation outside the fortified area has only been tentatively trenched, and consequently all that we know about it is its archaeological sequence traced to the subsoil water and a vast assortment of antiquities, the latter derived from the digging activities of the villagers which have given rise to a prolific international antiquity trade (for a survey of the archaeological situation of Chandraketugarh, Chakrabarti 2001a: 136–142; for its terracottas, Haque 2001). Nothing is known of its preurban levels, as is the case with all the Bhagirathi belt sites, but we infer that the basic substratum was laid by the Black-and-Red Ware (BRW) occupants of the area, who possibly moved to this section from the area of the western bank of the Bhagirathi sometime in the early first millennium BCE. It is not that anything regarding the BRW occupation of the area is known, but this seems to be a reasonable guess at the moment. The ancient name of Chandraketugarh is not known, but it is most likely to be the capital of the geographical unit of Vanga. This may also be the center of the kingdom of Gangaridai, which is mentioned in the Classical sources as lying to the east of the kingdom of Prasii, generally identified with Magadha or south Bihar (for a recent discussion, Chakrabarti 2001a: 154–155).

That Chandraketugarh was a major Indian entrepot of the contemporary Indian Ocean trade has been amply proved by the find of not merely Rouletted Ware but also antiquities bearing unmistakable Roman influence. I am personally aware of the existence of two terracotta male heads with laurel-leaf wreaths around them, and an unadorned female bust, also in terracotta, all in unpublished collections. No Indian female bust has ever been represented without some kind of jewelry, and the bust in question cannot belong to the traditional Indian genre. My inference is that the potters of Chandraketugarh witnessed Roman statuaries, including wreathed male heads and female busts, being imported and that they copied some of them in terracotta.

Tamluk/Tamralipta

This port, widely acclaimed in the literary sources, lies on the bank of the Rupnarayan, which meets the present Bhagirathi channel of the Hooghly shortly before it goes down to the sea (Chakrabarti 2001a: 149–150). The remains of the ancient port city, which cover the modern Tamluk town and its adjacent villages, are still mostly untouched by the river. Except a brief trenching, no systematic archaeological work has been done at the site. Antiquities, generally terracottas of great splendor, are abundant. The base of the sequence is formed by BRW, bone tools, and neolithic celts, which later give way to the NBP and associated assemblage. The bone tools found in this area include a fair quanitity of harpoons, which are similar to those found at the late third and second millennium BCE neolithic and later site of Golbai Sasan, not far from Puri in Orissa. In the case of Tamluk, this aspect has not been explored, but I feel that the probability of early neolithic sites is high in the Tamluk area, and if so, the site of Golbai Sasan represents a late third millennium BCE neolithic base covering a wide part of Orissan and West Bengal coastal areas (for Golbai Sasan, Sinha 2000). That Tamluk was related to the Indian Ocean trade of the period is clear from its mention in the Classical sources. Internally, it was the capital of the ancient geographical unit of *Suhma*, which extended along the Midnapur coast of West Bengal to the edge of Orissa. We also suspect that in the Mauryan period this port came possibly under the jurisdiction of Tosali, the Mauryan provinicial capital near Bhuvaneshwar. Interestingly, there is no trace of fortification at Tamluk. It was an open site.

Tildah

Not far from Tamluk and in the same area is the site of Tildah (Chakrabarti 2001a: 150–151), the ancient name of which is unknown. The site measures about half a kilometer across and possesses a citadel section of about fifteen acres surrounded by a ditch and possibly a mud fortification. NBP occurs here, and it is worth recording that a clay tablet containing an inscription in Greek was reported from here. A Christian missionary in Calcutta read the inscription as containing a reference to the goddess of Dawn. We interpret Tildah as a kind of administrative outpost of the Suhma territory.

Bahiri

Another early historic outpost of the Suhma territory may be Bahiri (Chakrabarti 2001a: 151) near modern Contai of Midnapur. This basically unexcavated but rich early historical site must have had something to do with maritime trade because a complete Roman amphora has been found in this general area.

Dihar

The site (Pal 1992) is near modern Vishnupur and located on the bank of the Dwarakeshwar river, which is the parent stream of the Rupnarayan, on the western bank of which Tamluk is situated. The site has a BRW base and an extensive repertoire of early historic material, including a large number of cast copper and silver punch-marked coins. The site should not measure more than 25 acres but it apparently marks a stage on the route coming from the north and going to Tamluk. Like Tamluk, this also is an open, unfortified site.

Pokharna

This early historical site (about 100 acres) with NBP and a BRW base (see *Indian*

Archaeology—a Review 1997–98: 200–203) is on the southern bank of the Damodar and the capital of the ancient geographical unit of Dakshina Radha or the southern Radha territory. The site is lineally arranged along the bank of the Damodar. Excavations have not yet revealed any integrated picture of its early historical level, but the significance of the site has long been understood on the basis of a fourth-century CE inscription which refers to it as the seat of a king. I interpret the site as the capital of a kingdom which was based on the control of the forest and mineral resources of southwest West Bengal. The route to Orissa, which came along the Ganga from northern India, passed through this sector before reaching the Orissan coast. There is no fortification at Pokharna.

Mangalkot

An early historic, NBP-bearing site with Black-and-Red Ware antecedence of circa 1000 BCE, Mangalkot (Ray and Mukherjee 1992) is located at the junction of the Kunoor and Ajay rivers, the latter joining the Bhagirathi not far from it. The site also lies on the route which came along the Ganga from northern India for Tamluk on the one hand and the Orissan coast on the other. The site measures about fifty acres or more and was the capital of the ancient geographical unit of Uttara Radha or northern Radha. Its ancient name is unknown but it has tentatively been identified (Chakrabarti 2001a: 125) with the city of Varddhamana, a city where the Jain precept Mahavira reputedly spent some time.

Kotasur

This also is an early historic NBP-bearing city site with a BRW base, but possesses a mud fortification of about 1 km in circuit (Chakrabarti 2001a: 113). I believe it to be the capital of the ancient geographical unit of Gauda which covered modern Murshidabad and parts of the neighboring Birbhum districts.

Two general features are common to all the sites we have mentioned in the case of the western part of West Bengal. Except Dihar, Tildah, and Bahiri, all of them including the famous port site of Tamluk were the capitals of the regional geographic units of Suhma (Tamluk), Daksina Radha (Pokharna), Uttara Rarha (Mangalkot), and Gauda (Kotasur). The textual and epigraphic evidence on the locations of these geographical units and the position and character of these sites are conclusive regarding this point. Second, all the sites mentioned in this context, including Dihar, Tildah, and Bahiri, are related to the route which followed the Ganga from north India to reach the port of Tamralipta on the one hand and the Orissan coast on the other. In West Bengal this route followed the northern edge of the Bhagirathi in the Murshidabad district, went up to Kotasur on the bank of the Mayurakshi, a tributary of the Bhagirathi, and moved from Kotasur to Mangalkot across the Ajay, another Bhagirathi tributary. A short branch of this route could also have directly crossed the Bhagirathi and the Ajay near modern Katwa, without going to Kotasur, and come straight to Mangalkot. From Mangalkot it was more or less a straight route up to the modern Arambagh sector of Hooghly, where one line bifurcated toward the modern Calcutta sector of sites (i.e., the sites along the Adi Ganga) and another line went in the direction of Chandrakona, where the route for Tamralipta separated from the one going

to Orissa. There is no doubt about these alignments and their relationship with the urban sites we have listed in this context. That a route could branch off near Arambagh toward the Calcutta sector of sites has recently been archaeologically highlighted by the discovery of NBP-bearing sites in the Seoraphuli area, which is not far from Calcutta (personal information from R. K. Chattopadhyay).

Observations on the Bengal Sites

Thus by about 200 BCE there were nine or ten urban centers in the Bengal zone: Wari-Bateshwar, Mahasthangarh, Chandraketugarh, Tamluk, Tildah, Dihar, Bahiri, Pokharna, Mangalkot, and Kotasur, in addition to a kind of urban conurbation along the original flow of the Bhagirathi between Dumdum/Calcutta and Sagar island. Tildah and Dihar were perhaps no better than subsidiary administrative centers and Bahiri on the coast represented possibly a minor port area, but the rest were major centers of trade and administration, each of them being the capitals of individual geographical units. The dates for their early phase are available only from Wari-Bateshwar, which show at least a mid-fifth century BCE date for the NBP in this easternmost section of the Bengal delta and correspondingly suggests that the other centers too were most likely to have emerged during that period, if not earlier. This in turn has the implication of suggesting that all the relevant geographical units of the Bengal region have an antiquity dating back from the Mahajanapada phase of ancient Indian history.

SOUTH BIHAR

Till recently, the modern state of Jharkhand or the core area of the Chhotanagpur plateau was also a part of "South Bihar." Now "South Bihar" means only the section south of the Ganga in Bihar, and this stretch comprises the ancient geographical units of Anga or roughly the modern Rajmahal-Bhagalpur-Munger-Kiul area and Magadha, which includes the whole alluvial area between Kiul and Banaras, including the Rajgor-Patna-Ara-Sasaram stretch (for the textual and epigraphic details of the historical geography of Bihar, Pandey 1963).

Champa

This capital of Anga, located in the Nathnagar locality of modern Bhagalpur, has a high citadel in the form of about 14 meters high, fortified platform of about 50 acres, which is surrounded by a ditch on all sides, and has a 1 km long, narrow strip of ordinary occupation at its foot by the side of the Ganga. The rampart wall of the citadel came up in the early phase of the NBP at the site and is preceded by a BRW deposit (*Indian Archaeology—a Review* 1968–69: 6; 1969–70: 2; 1970–71: 4–5; 1971–72: 5; 1972–73: 6–7; 1974–75: 8–9; 1975–76: 7; 1976–77: 11–12; 1982–83: 15–16). Small-scale excavations have revealed mostly jewelers's molds and evidence of ivory working. The high citadel of Champa looked far into the Ganga and was certainly intended to control her boat traffic to and from Bengal. The scale of the platform and

its date suggest that this traffic was important in the context of the sixth century BCE and later.

Rajgir

Ancient Rajagriha, the first capital of Magadha, dates from the early phase of the NBP or at least the sixth century BCE, and has three components: the focus of religious places in a hill-girt narrow valley, the citadel surrounded by a mud rampart and a ditch outside the hill-girt valley, and a trading center and an ordinary residential area at the neighboring site of Giriyak. There is a core of pre-NBP BRW occupation inside the hill-girt area of Rajgir, which is also defended by a cyclopaean masonry wall at least at the major entrances to the valley. A recent survey (Harding 2003) has demonstrated that the only entrances were fortified; along the hilltops the so-called fortification wall was nothing more than a kind of marker defining the limits of the settlement.

Devangarh

The site lies in an U-shaped valley on the northern side of the range which separates the area south of Rajgir from the area of Hazaribagh in Jharkhand. This eighty-five-acre fortified site, which has a ditch all around and shows plenty of BRW and NBP on the surface, is unexcavated (Chakrabarti 2001a: 184) but it must have been contemporary with Rajgir, and its location suggests that it was established to control the area south of Rajgir and to facilitate the flow of minerals and timber from that direction. I argued that Rajgir, the ancient context must also have been a center which mediated the flow of the Jharkhand or Chhotanagpur minerals and timber to the trade network of the Ganga valley.

Pataliputra

The ancient city of Pataliputra still lies unexcavated below the closely built-up area of "Patna City" (not the same as Patna, the capital of Bihar), and the excavations which have been conducted at Bulandibagh and Kumrahar deal only with the outer wooden fortification (Bulandibagh) and a pillared hall outside the city limits (Kumrahar). The geographical location of Pataliputra at the junction of the Ganga and Son reflected the changing political aspirations of Magadha as a pan-Indian power: access to, control over, the Ganga; easy access to north Bihar across the river; and an easy, direct access along the Son to the route which linked the entire Banaras-Allahabad area with central India and the Deccan.

Nindaur

This fortified thirty-acre unexcavated site with BRW and NBP on the surface is located exactly at the point where the route coming both from Pataliputra and the Rajgir belt emerges into the plain after passing through a stretch of the Kaimur hills (Singh, Tewari and Singh 1999–2000). The location of Nindaur shows that this route, which linked Magadha with the modern Banaras area or the ancient kingdom of Kasi, was important in the early historic scheme of things because otherwise a fortified place like Nindaur would not have been established at this point.

Buxar

Modern Buxar or ancient Vedagarbhapuri (Patil 1963) was an urban center, as its 1 km long archaeological occupation along the Ganga and the surviving portion of the mound demonstrate. It was no doubt a river port and important in maintaining links with the Ballia section of Uttar Pradesh.

Thus there are six principal urban sites in the combined stretch of Anga and Magadha. I am tempted to add the much-destroyed site of Masarh between Patna and Buxar to this list, but the evidence is inconclusive. The geographical parameters of the sites listed here are well defined, and their basic archaeological data take their antiquity back to the sixth century BCE and before.

The distribution of major urban sites in south Bihar is, thus, the following. Along the Ganga, there are three sites: Champa, Pataliputra, and Buxar. I have commented on Champa being a center to control the river traffic to Bengal. The whole belt of the Rajmahal hills and the Chhotanagpur plateau constitutes a kind of hinterland of Champa, and it is reasonable to infer that, like Rajgir, Champa also brought the minerals and timber of the plateau region to the Ganga plain. There are two or three major sites—Rajgir and Nindaur—away from the major Magadhan rivers, the Ganga and the Son. One can perhaps add Masarh to the list, but the status of Masarh is somewhat uncertain. Similarly, there is a fortified site called Deo Umga between Sasaram and Bhabua, but the mud ramparts of the place are not dated and may belong to later periods. The same may be said about the site of Indpe near Jamui. Nindaur may be described as the capital of the ancient Karusha geographical unit (Anand 1995), which basically comprised the Son-related territory of south Bihar.

NORTH BIHAR

North Bihar covers the vast geographical tract between the Kosi valley in the east and the Little Gandak in the west. The ancient geographical names that one gets for this area are Vajji, Videha, Mithila, and Tirabhukti. The focus of Vajji was Vaisali, whereas the admittedly later term Tirabhukti possibly connoted a wider geographical area comprising both Vajji and Mithila. The core of the Mithila/Videha region is modern Darbhanga-Madhubani-Sitamarhi.

Sikligarh

The distribution of urban sites in modern Bihar to the north of the Ganga begins at the unexcavated site of Sikligarh in the east, where about 200 acres of land are surrounded by a mud rampart and have a stump of a Mauryan stone column outside the ramparts. That this column is Mauryan cannot be doubted, and this means that Sikligarh was a major site on the way to the north Bengal sites of Bangarh and Mahasthangarh via the modern Purnea area. Having crossed over to the other side of the Ganga (probably at Chechar-Kutubpur) from Pataliputra, a route followed the modern Samastipur-Saharsa-Purnea alignment. Sikligarh near modern Banmankhi falls on this route.

Naulagarh, Jai Mangala Garh, and Mangalagarh

Naulagarh is an unpublished NBP-bearing site of about one sq km and with a surrounding mud fortification wall (approach from Begusarai) is basically unexcaqvated and lies, like Sikligarh, on the route which traveled east from Pataliputra by following the northern edge of the Ganga. Also lying on this route is Jai Mangal Garh, a roughly 80–100 acre NBP-bearing site which is clearly surrounded by a moat but is perhaps without fortification. I have not seen the site of Mangalagarh, which reputedly lies in the Samastipur sector and is an early historic fortified site.

Collectively, the four above-mentioned sites bring out the significance of Pataliputra's line of communication with northern Bengal and beyond. There are four fortified early historic sites in the modern Vaisali-Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga sector.

Vaisali, Katragarh, Balirajgarh, Kopagarh, and Manjhi

Extensive excavations have taken place at Vaisali, mostly at the structural religious sites associated with the life of the Buddha and the tradition of its ruling power of the Lichhavis. The first period of its fortification has been dated only to 200 BCE, but there are extensive traces of occupation beyond the fortified enclosed area of about one sq km. Katragarh is marginally excavated, and this fortified early historic site, possibly on the bank of an old course of the Bagmati, is near modern Muzaffarpur. Its fortification has been dated to circa 200 BCE. Balirajgarh is a fortified, about 1 sq km site, its fortification dated to circa 200 BCE. The site lies to the north-northeast of modern Madhubani and lies at the edge of the Nepalese Terai. Kopagarh (discovered by S. K. Jha) is an unexcavated, seventy-acre, presumably fortified site, and has BRW and NBP on the surface. This is also located in the Madhubani sector but more in the direction of Sitamarhi. Manjhi is a briefly excavated, seventeen/eighteen-acre fortified site on the bank of the Ghaghra or Sarayu (fortification put around 200 BCE) is in the Gandak valley, almost at Bihar's border with the Gorakhpur area of Uttar Pradesh (for the details of the sites in this section, Chakrabarti 2001a: chapter 6).

This is a fair cluster of major sites. Vaisali, Katragarh, Balirajgarh, and Kopagarh seem to highlight the general archaeological significance of a rather limited geographical stretch between modern Vaisali and Madhubani. The location of Balirajgarh is such that its influence must have incorporated the Terai region of Nepal at this point. Incidentally, Kopagarh and Balirajgarh fall in the Videha/ Mithila sector, while both Vaisali and Katragarh are in the Vajji area. Manjhi comes up on the line of communication with the eastern sector of Uttar Pradesh. One is not sure if the fortifications of all these places have been correctly dated. All of them belong to the NBP phase, but perhaps quite arbitrarily the NBP recovered from the core of the ramparts has been assigned to its late phase. All of them should be pre-Mauryan in antiquity. Interestingly, the Asokan columns at Vaisali, Lauriya Areraj, Lauriya Nandangarh, and Rampurwa mark out a route from Pataliputra via Vaisali to Nepal through Rampurwa. No urban site of north Bihar, except Vaisali, can be linked to this route.

UTTAR PRADESH

The Trans-Sarayu Area

Jharmatiya or Ancient Pawa

This area is dominated principally by the geographical unit of Kosala but has at its eastern edge the much smaller units of the Malla, Koliya, and Sakya territories. The Buddha's final journey from Vaisali to Kusinagar, where he died, took him past the major *stūpa* site of Kesariya to Pipra Ghat on the bank of the Gandak, where he crossed the river to reach the modern Jharmatiya-Usmanpur sector before proceeding to Kusinagar. Both Jharmatiya and Usmanpur are early historic sites, but Jharmatiya (about one km long and somewhat less in width) is much the larger of the two and may tentatively be identified with Pawa, where the Buddha spent the night before reaching Kusinagar. There is no surface indication of its being fortified. In the same sector is the site of Sathiyaon-Fazilnagar, a cluster of mounds representing the ancient Sresthigrama (an inscribed sealing from Fazilnagar). Kusinara is a site full of Buddhist religious structures; there is no archaeological evidence that it was a major settlement site of the period (for the details, Chakrabarti 2001a: 210–212).

Kopia, Siswania, Bhuiladih, Bharat Bhari, Piprahwa-Ganwaria, and Banarasi Kalan

All these sites fall basically in the modern Basti area. Kopia (fortified, about one km long, with half the breadth, a moat on all sides except the section along the Ami river) is on the route which led to Piprahwa-Ganwaria (Srivastava 1996; for other sites, Chakrabarti 2001a: 220–223) and eventually Lumbini. Siswania has been claimed to be a large BRW and NBP and later site, but I am hesitant to admit it as a major site on the basis of the surface indications. Bhuiladih, once identified with Kapilavastu, is a twenty-five– to thirty-acre early historical site. Of similar size is the site of Banarasi Kalan, which has a *stūpa* in its outskirts. Neither Bhuili nor Banarasi Kalan is fortified. Bharat Bhari is a major site, although its present extent is about twenty acres, much of it having been destroyed. None of these sites can be given their ancient names. Piprahwa-Ganwaria represent ancient Kapilavastu (on the basis of inscribed terracotta sealings which mention having been seals of the monastic organization of Kapilavastu). Piprahwa was the *stūpa* site, whereas Ganwaria, an unfortified site of about twenty acres, was the Kapilavastu settlement site. The size and features of this settlement set in an area of level rice fields do not indicate that the Buddha's father presided over an important kingdom. The local tradition affirms that Banarasi Kalan was the Buddha's Nanihal (i.e., maternal grandmother's place—the place where his mother came from).

Tlaurakot, Sravasti, and Chardah

A fortified site with a surrounding moat (area roughly thirty-five to thirty-six acres) lies on the bank of the Banganga river at the foot of the Nepal Siwaliks. Tilaurakot (see Chakrabarti 2001c: 205) is in the center of an area studded with Buddhist ruins,

including those of Lumbini. The site has a pre-NBP antiquity, but after the discovery of the inscribed sealings of the monastic organization of Kapilavastu at Piprahwa, its claim to be the site of ancient Kapilavastu has to be given up in favor of Piprahwa-Ganwaria. Located on the bank of the Rapti near Balarampur in the Gonda-Bahraich sector of the trans-Sarayu area of Uttar Pradesh, Sravasti (Chakrabarti 2001c: 202–204; also Takahashi et al. 1999–2000) is divided into a monastic section called Saheth where the Jetavana monastery, where the Buddha frequently stayed, has been identified and an ordinary fortified settlement section called Maheth, where excavations have been marginal. The city plan is that of a crescent with a roughly eight km circuit of its surrounding wall. The importance of the Sravasti area has also been highlighted by the presence of a fortified early historic settlement at Chardah, which lies on an access route to Nepal through the Siwaliks.

In the trans-Sarayu area of Uttar Pradesh, two major routes emanated from the direction of Sravasti. One followed the northern bank of the river, and the Kopia route to Piprahwa-Ganwaria and Lumbini branched off this route. This route also linked up with the route that came from the direction of north Bihar to Kusinara. Another route went from Sravasti to places like Tilaurakot in the Nepalese Terai, skirting the edge of the outer Nepal Siwaliks.

Ballia-Banaras-Robertsganj-Azamgarh-Ghazipur-Jaunpur-Faizabad-Sultanpur Sector

Pakka Kot, Khairadih, Lakhnesar Dih, and Tika Deori

The thirty-acre fortified and unexcavated early historic site of Pukka Kot lies across the Ganga at Buxar and lies on the route from Pataliputra to Lumbini. Khairadih (about thirty or forty acres) lies at a major crossing point of the Sarayu, and in between Lakhnesar Dih (about fifteen acres) and Tika Deori (about one km along the Chhoti Sarayu river) seem to be important staging posts (for these sites, Chakrabarti 2001a: 232).

Nahush-ka-Tila and Masaon Dih

Nahush-ka-Tila, which lies at the back of the Ghoshi market in Azamgarh, is roughly an eighty-six-acre fortified and unexcavated site with NBP and BRW. Masaon Dih in Ghazipur (about twenty-five to thirty acres) has no visible trace of fortification, but shows a level plateau-like tract with a drop of three to four meters on all sides. There are traces of a surrounding ditch (for these sites, Fuhrer 1891).

Banaras, Bairant, Ahraura, and Raja-Nal-Ka-Tila

As the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kasi, Banaras was an important place, but its importance as a city had a lot to do with its location on a network of both regional and subcontinental routes. On the one hand, Banaras was a major river port on the Ganga and on the other, it was the terminal point of the routes which linked it with Ayodhya near Faizabad through modern Jaunpur (ancient fortified site of Manhej) and with the modern Azamgarh sector and beyond, via Masaon Dih and Nahush-ka-Tila. Equally

important, Banaras was an important Gangetic valley terminal point of the route which stretched from there to the Deccan through different sections of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The antiquity of the fortification traced at Rajghat is certainly circa sixth century BCE or probably earlier. Banaras also linked up with the route which came from Pataliputra via Nindore to Chakia and from Chakia to Banaras either via Ahraura or via Bhuili. Bairant is a much-destroyed site, but it measures about thirty acres and was possibly fortified. Near Sakaldiha, it is not far from Banaras and possibly fell on a route which led straight to the Buxar area from Ahraura, the latter being a small fortified post at the junction of two branches of the route which went to the Deccan, one via Ahraura to Sarguja and the Chhattisgarh basin and the other via Ahraura, Chunar, Mirzapur, and beyond. Raja Nal-ka-Tila was an unfortified roughly fifteen- or twenty-acre settlement, apparently the focus of ancient settlements in the Robertsganj sector. Similarly, Agiabir on the bank of the Ganga upstream of Banaras was linked to the river crossing at this place for Mirzapur, if one traveled from Banaras. Mirzapur itself has a cluster of ancient settlements (for sites in this section, Chakrabarti 2001a: chapter 7; also for Agiabir, Singh and Singh 1999–2000; for Raja Nal-ka-Tila, Tewari and Srivastava 1996–97).

Manhej, Ayodhya, and Sites in Sultanpur

Manhej is a fortified and unexcavated site covering about forty acres and lies on the route which linked Banaras with Ayodhya. At Akbarpur on this route the route bifurcated, one branch going to Ayodhya and the other going to Tanda to cross the Sarayu there for the Basti area, from which Lumbini was accessible via Kopia. The Sarayu was crossed at Ayodhya for Sravasti. At the other end the route which passed through Manhej came not merely from Banaras but also from Mirzapur, coming, in turn, all the way from the Deccan through the Rewa area. The massive, fortified site of Ayodhya has not been explored in detail, but the date of the NBP here goes back to the eighth century BCE and earlier. Three sites in the Sultanpur area deserve notice: Garha (one km along the Gomati and a width of about 300 m); Gokula (about 120 acres, fortified, in the Sai valley), and Narayani (about thirty acres, extensive traces of brick structures). These sites seem to be related to the links between Ayodhya and the Allahabad sectors (for sites in this section, Chakrabarti 2001a: chapter 8).

Allahabad-Kausambi Sector

Prayag, Sringaverapura, Bhita, Kausambi

Prayag, the junction of the Ganga and the Yamuna, is one of the most important Hindu pilgrim spots, and the importance of the place has been amply reflected in the towering (about fifty meters high) and massive (1.5 km long and about 700 meters broad; roughly 275 acres) mound of Jhusi, which rises from the Ganga cliff opposite modern Allahabad. Jhusi was ancient Prayag. The NBP found at the site has been dated in the eighth century BCE (calibrated), with the general occupational sequence extending back to the neolithic and the mesolithic. There is no evidence of fortification at Jhusi. The site of Sringaverapur, about one km long along the Ganga, lies upstream

from Jhusi, and although nothing except a massive tank complex of the late centuries BCE has been excavated here, the size and scale of the tank complex itself signify the importance of the site, which lies at an ancient Ganga crossing, while coming from the direction of Ayodhya through Sultanpur. Bhita, a fortified site with considerable traces of occupation outside the fortifications, is upstream along the Yamuna from Allahabad. A land route also went from Prayag to the area of Kausambi further upstream via Bhita, which also has a number of rock-cut caves in its vicinity. Kausambi on the eastern bank of the Yamuna, one of the most imposing ramparted early historic city sites of the subcontinent, was the capital of the geographical unit of Vatsa. The geographical importance of Kausambi lies in the fact that apart from Banaras this was the most important Ganga plain terminal point of a major section of the routes between the Ganga plain and the Deccan. The Yamuna was not crossed at Kausambi itself but a little downstream, oppposite modern Mau, where the route coming from Prayag via Bhita met the line from Kausambi and went in the direction of the Vindhyas, with central India and the Deccan in mind. The Kausambi rampart certainly dates from the early phase of the NBP. In the Allahabad sector there are a few more large but inconspicuous sites such as Chauharjan, Kara, Bihar, and Khairagarh in the size range of twenty-thirty acres. A high citadel-like formation dominates Chauharjan on the bank of the Sai. Bihar, set on the bank of a large watery depression, seems primarily to be a religious structural site. Kara, a much destroyed and presumably fortified site, lies on a Ganga crossing, while coming from the direction of Kausambi on the Yamuna. Khairagarh lies on the bank of the Tons between Allahabad and Meja and was possibly related to a route which followed the Tons from the direction of the Vindhyas. Larger than this category is Hindaur or Handaur on the bank of an old course of the Sai in Pratapgarh (about fifty acres), but no structural feature except possibly a *stūpa* mound can be located here.

As far as the ancient geographical units are concerned, the situation in this sector is somewhat fluid. The two fixed points are Ayodhya, which was admittedly in Kosala and Kausambi, which was admittedly in Vatsa. Was the Allahabad area in Kosala or in Vatsa? It may be useful to accept the Ganga as a kind of dividing line between these two geographical units in this sector. Sites like Jhusi and Sringaverapura would belong by this yardstick to Kosala while the area to the west of modern Allahabad would belong to the Vatsa territory (for sites in this section, Chakrabarti 2001a: chapter 8; for Jhusi, Misra, Pal and Gupta 1999–2000).

From Pratapgarh to Sitapur: The Sector of Kanpur-Lucknow

The major sites in this section are Kotra (on the bank of the Ganga; thirty-five to forty acres), Parsarwa (the Sai valley; twenty-five acres), Dalmau (on the Ganga; twenty-five to thirty acres), Kansmira (the Sai valley; 100 acres), Paithan (the Sai valley; twenty-five acres), Chaura (between the Sai and the Gomati; sixty acres), Reh (on the Yamuna; seventy acres), Manikpur (on the Ganga; ninety acres), Hulas Khera (between the Sai and the Gomati; eighty-five acres), Musanagar (on the Yamuna; 175 acres), Galatha (on the Rind; twenty acres), Sanchankot (the Sai valley; roughly of the size of Musanagar), Newal (between the Ganga and the Sai; roughly of the size of Musanagar), Dhruv Tila (on the Ganga; fifty to sixty acres), Mohan (on the Sai; thirty acres) and Manoadih (the Gomati valley; fifty acres). Of these I consider the following mounds with more than local significance: Kotra, Manikpur, Dalmau, Dhruv Tila, and Jajmau on the Ganga, and Reh and Musanagar on the Yamuna (for all these sites, Chakrabarti, Tewari and Singh 2000; for Sringaverapura, Lal 1993).

Kotra, Manikpur, Dalmau, Dhruv Tila, and Jajmau

All these sites can be called river-ports on the Ganga, but Jajmau, the roughly 1 km-long high mound that one sees in the outskirts of Kanpur while coming from the direction of Lucknow, was also a major urban center, being the ancient counterpart of modern Kanpur. The ancient name is not known. Of the other three sites, the most important is Manikpur. Dhruv Tila could be primarily a religious settlement, but the mound standing high at modern Bithur north of Kanpur is large and virtually unexcavated.

Reh and Musanagar

There is little doubt that Reh was one of the river ports on the Yamuna, forming a kind of chain from Allahabad upward: Bhita, Kausambi, Reh, and Musanagar, and so on. Musanagar is an unfortified city site located at a Yamuna crossing in the direction of the Betwa which joins the Yamuna nearby in Hamirpur and pursues a course almost to the Narmada valley of central India. Musanagar has also a couple of second-century BCE or earlier Bharhut-type Buddhist stūpa sites in its outskirts. The site has a BRW antecedence.

The entire area is securely within the Panchala ancient geographical domain. Panchala incorporates the vast area of both the lower and upper Ganga-Yamuna Doab, including the northern part of Oudh.

From Hardoi-Kanauj to Haldwani-Pilibhit-Rampur

Sadabad, Lakhmapur, Kanauj, Ahichhatra, Raja-Ben-ka-Qila

In the Hardoi-Kanauj sector there are two major sites, Sadabad and Lakhmapur, apart from Kanauj itself. The roughly 1 km-long mound at Sadabad has a citadel section and could have lain on the road between Ahichchhatra and Kanauj and be an administrative center of Panchala. Lakhmapur (about sixty acres) is an undisturbed structural mound and may contain the ruins of a large Buddhist stūpa and monastery. The ancient ruins of Kanauj lie below the modern settlement, its extent and miscellaneous finds suggesting that Kanauj was an important city site long before it became the capital of the Maukhari kingdom in the seventh century CE. It is worthwhile to cite the old Farrukhabad district gazetteer on Kanauj:

> the modern town is a mere fraction of the ancient city, whose traces are found as far south as Sarai Miran and Rajgir Har. . . . Old tiles, old coins and pieces of broken sculpture encounter the ploughshare in its course through the neighbouring fields. The removal of ancient bricks with which these fields are strewn has hitherto proved to be a task of despair. But of

such materials are composed the houses of modern Kanauj, the huts of adjoining villages and the ballast of the railroad (Neave 1911: 217).

Upward along the Banganga-Garra valley, in Shajahanpur-Bareily sector, the most important site is Ahichchhatra (fortification 5.6 km in circuit; the mound only marginally excavated; stūpa sites outside the fortifications) whose significance can be explained not merely by its political importance in the Panchala territory but also as the place where the trading from the entire Tarai and hill belt of this region congregrated. Of the same general character is the site of Kashipur (fortification circuit of about three km) in the Rampur-Haldwani-Kathgodam belt of Tarai, which was also the possible capital of the Kuninda Janapada or the geographical territory of the Kunindas. In the Pilibhit area the most important site is Raja-Ben-ka-Qila (about eighty acres) which, like modern Pilibhit, could be a center of trade with the Tanakpur area of Nepal (for sites in this section, Chakrabarti et al. 2001).

Farrukhabad-Etah-Mainpuri-Budaun-Etawah

Kampil, Sankisa, Chakranagar, Atranjikhera, and Kudarkot

A thirty-acre mound on an old bank of the Ganga, Kampil is known as the southern capital of Panchala, the northern one being Ahichchhatra, but otherwise it is not a prominent settlement. There are extensive traces of an apparently brick-walled settlement of the late centuries BCE and early centuries CE in the neighborhood of modern Kampil. Sankisa, a fortified site with a somewhat circular periphery of more than five km in circuit, was apparently the city-site par excellence of this region but the site is virtually unexcavated. It was the most important administrative center of the central Ganga-Yamuna Doab in the second half of the first millennium BCE and lay on the route between Kanauj in the south and the Agra-Mathura region in the north. Further, it offers an easy access through Etawah to the trans-Chambal section of central India. Chakranagar near Etawah lies in the Yamuna ravines (on the bank of the Yamuna; a major site of 80–100 acres, possibly fortified) and gave access to the Chambal valley and beyond. Atranjikhera (more than 100 acres; excavations focused only on a very limited area) lies on a route between Mathura and Ahichchhatra. The entire Mainpuri-Etah-Etawah section is dominated by a large number of high (usually around fifteen-twenty meters high) and extensive mounds, of which Kudarkot (eighty to eighty-five acres, about eighteen meters high) is a convenient example (for sites in this section, Chakrabarti et al. 2002).

Agra-Mathura-Aligarh-Bulandshahr

Bateshwar, Mathura, Sankara, Ahar

Bateshwar near Shikohabad, located on the bank of the Yamuna, was a city-site (NBP dated in the seventh century BCE) giving access to the Bhind-Morena and Gwalior areas of central India, with which the Agra region had traditional links. Most of the excavations carried out at Mathura since the nineteenth century have been conducted at religious architectural and sculptural mounds in the outskirts of the ancient city, which lies principally unexcavated below the congested localities of the "old Mathura" section of modern Mathura. There are many sites in the Mathura region, oriented generally along the routes which led to the Bharatpur and Dig areas of the bordering Rajasthan in the west and Ahichchhatra via Sankara on the Ganga in the east. Ahar, located on the bank of the Ganga in Bulandshahr, was also a crossing point to reach the Moradabad-Rampur section of the upper Doab. Most of this sector would belong to the Surasena territory, of which Mathura was the capital, but the northern section of Aligarh-Bulandshahr could belong to Panchala which, like Kosala, seems to have covered a very large territory (for sites in this section, Chakrabarti, Tewari and Singh, forthcoming-b).

THE DECCAN ROUTES AND THE URBAN SITES OF MADHYA PRADESH AND CHHATTISGARH

The first section of these routes began at Rajgir and Pataliputra. From Rajgir the route passed through the Gaya-Sasaram sector and emerged out of a strip of the Kaimur hills at Nindaur. This was joined in the Sasaram sector by the route coming from Pataliputra along the Son valley. The route from Rajgir could also go to Pataliputra first, before taking the Son alignment. The second section comprises the Chakia-Ahraura-Bhuili-Banaras areas, with Chakia lying at the junction of three routes: from Chakia to Ahraura and from Ahraura to Banaras; from Chakia to the Robertsganj area (Raja Nal-ka-Tila) on the way to the upper course of the Son; and from Chakia to Banaras via Bhuili on the Ahraura-Banaras alignment. At Ahraura the route in the direction of the Deccan bifurcated, one going to cross the Son and travel through Sarguja, Bilaspur-Raipur, and Maharashtra with a separate turn toward the Andhra coast, and the other continuing the Chakia-Ahraura alignment to Mirzapur and from Mirzapur to Rewa through the Adhwa-Manigarha area. Banaras strongly featured as a Ganga plain point in this network. In the next section, a route proceeded from modern Allahabad or ancient Prayag in the direction of the present Mau-Shankargarh area, and there the route was joined by the route coming out of Kausambi, with the joined route going to climb the Vindhyan scarp either at Sohagi Ghat or at Baldaha Ghat to reach the Beehar valley alignment to Rewa. In the section further north, a route went straight from the Kanpur-Lucknow segment to Musanagar on the Yamuna to reach the Betwa alignment beginning in Hamirpur and continuing to the area south of modern Bhopal. Proceeding further north, Chakranagar near Etawah gave access both to the Chambal valley and the Betwa alignment through Jalaun and Jhansi. The Asokan inscription site of Datia is located on this Chakranagar-Betwa alignment section. More to the north, Bateshwar opened the way to the Chambal and Gwalior, from where the route traveled in the direction of ancient Vidisa via the site of Pawaya (a site not yet studied by me). Mathura was linked principally with Rajasthan, and from the Kota and Chitor sections of east Rajasthan Ujjayini, the famous city site of central India was easily accessible, and the Ujjayini area led in turn to west India on the one hand, to Maharashtra beyond the Narmada on the other. It is interesting to reflect that all the ancient urban sites along the Ganga and Yamuna that we have traced had a route

connection with the Deccan, either directly across the rivers or through the sites which lay at the western edge of the valley.

In central India itself there was a kind of dendritic alignment of these routes going in the direction of Andhra and Maharashtra. To take only a few fixed points, the most important site on the route which went across the Son from Banaras-Ahraura was Malhar, a massively fortified, marginally excavated capital of South Kosala. I have no doubt that the antiquity of Malhar goes back to the Mahajanapada period. Proceeding west from Malhar, one section of the route went straight to the Andhra coast through western Orissa, whereas another section of this route went further west to reach ancient city-sites of Pauni and Adam near Nagpur, from where there was a route to the Andhra coast through the Karimnagar district of Andhra, where Dhulikottah is a major early historic city-site. If the route does not turn here for Dhulikottah it proceeds west in the direction of Kaundinyapura to the west of Nagpur and Bhokardan or ancient Bhogavarddhana near Ajanta, from where Paithan or ancient Pratisthana on the Godavari was only a short distance away. The routes emanating from between Mirzapur and Kausambi climbed the Vindhyas in their own ways and met near Rewa, where the early historic site of Itaha can be called an urban center. From Itaha the main route passed through Bharhut and Kakrehat (near Rupnath, a site of Asokan edicts) to reach Tripuri, the capital of Tripuri Janapada near Jabalpur, and from Tripuri routes went both south and west, the southern one passing through the Balaghat area to reach Pauni on the Banganga. The western one followed the Narmada and emerged in the area south of Bhopal. The route which came via Musanagar joined the Betwa alignment, along which there is a host of city sites: Tumain or "Tumbavana," Vidisa, Nandur (south of Bhopal, a fortified city), and Ninnaur, with the last one lying at an ancient Narmada crossing. From this crossing a route went in the direction of Burhanpur on the Tapti via the Khandwa area. The route which came from the direction of Chakranagar and Bateshwar and passed through the Chambal valley first also came to Vidisa via Pawaya and from Vidisa followed the Betwa alignment to the Narmada, crossing at Ninnaur unless it turned toward Uhjjayini from Vidisa. The routes which originated at Mathura and went to Ujjayini from the Kota and Chitor sectors of Rajasthan went straight to the Narmada crossing at Maheshwar, from where also there was a route to the Tapti crossing at Burhanpur. From the Ujjayini side the Narmada could also be crossed in the Barwani sector and the routes led straight to Nasik and via Chalisgaon, to Pratisthana.

In Maharashtra the early historic site of Nasik with Buddhist rock-cut caves in its outskirts led across the Western Ghats to Kalyan and Sopara on the west, from where there were routes to the urban sites of Kolhapur (ancient "Brahmapuri") and Ter. From Pratisthana too a route went to Ter and from Ter one section reached for Andhra while another reached Sannati in Gulbarga in Karnataka or southern Deccan.

There is not a shadow of doubt that the ancient city-sites of central India were tied to the crisscross network of the routes linked to the Ganga-Yamuna plain (for the details of the Deccan routes, Chakrabarti, Tewari and Singh forthcoming-a; Chakrabarti forthcoming).

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Within the confines of the selected geographical framework, this study is reasonably definitive in the sense that future archaeological surveys are unlikely to come up with more urban sites in the Gangetic India between the Bengal delta and Mathura and in the central Indian regions of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. As emphasized in each section, the correlationship between these sites and various routes passing through them is striking, and so is the element of their being the foci of various ancient geographical units. A problem which one cannot escape is the question of the antiquity of these geographical units. The textual sources mention only sixteen principal units—Mahajanapadas—and one suspects that the ordinary Janapadas did not find a special mention in this context. The fact that virtually all these sites have NBP and earlier BRW goes some way to prove that they emerged into focus by the sixth-fifth centuries BCE all over the region we have discussed in this chapter.

If one has to summarize the broad configuration of routes in the section of the Gangetic valley under review in this chapter, one would say that it would be easier to appreciate this configuration if we view it in relation to certain major sites like Pataliputra, Varanasi, Sravasti, and Mathura. From Pataliputra a route went down the Ganga and also along its right bank to reach Champa and then the Bengal delta via the Rajmahal bend of the river. It is also possible that the western portion of Bengal was partly approached through the modern Jamui area in the Chhotanagpur plateau section. Some BRW sites have been located in this area and these may link up with the BRW sites in Bengal in the Ajay valley. Reaching the Barind tract of Bengal from the Champa area was easy; all that one had to do was to cross the river somewhere between modern Kahalgaon and Rajmahal. I suspect that one of these ancient crossings was at Patharghata near Kahalgaon. To reach the Bhagirathi mouth around Calcutta, one could either sail down the Bhagirathi or follow the alignment which linked the sites of Kotasur, Mangalkot, Dihar, Pokharna, and Tamluk. This alignment also led to the Orissan coast. From Pataliputra, one could also cross over to the Chechar-Kutubpur area and from there follow the present-day Samastipur-Begusarai-Purnea alignment through the site of Sikligarh to reach the sites in Barind, i.e., Kandaran, Bangarh, and Mahasthangarh. The port of this region was Wari-Bateshwar, which was also connected with Assam by the Brahmaputra. From Pataliputra another ferry crossing led to the present Ramchaura Ghat sector, and from there a route went through Vaisali and past Lauriya Areraj, Lauriya Nandangarh, Rampurwa, and Bhikna Tori pass to Nepal. A variant of this route led from Vaisali to Katragarh and Balirajgarh to Nepal. A further variant led from Vaisali past Kesariya and the Pipra Ghat crossing of the Gandak to reach the Kusinara section of the trans-Sarayu section of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Pataliputra was further linked with Banaras both by the river via the river port of Buxar and the overland connection through the Son valley and the Kaimurs. Pataliputra was also connected with Rajagriha. One could also travel from Pataliputra to the Piprahwa-Lumbini area by traveling through Masarh and crossing the Ganga at Buxar, from where the route would have gone past Pakka Kot, Khairadih, Tika Deori, Laknesar Dih, and Kopia.

Ignoring the links of Varanasi with Pataliputra and the Deccan, one finds that Varanasi lay at the junction of a few other routes. One route led past Masaon Dih and

Nahush-ka-Tila to the modern Gorakhpur area. Another route went through Manhej to Ayodhya, or if one preferred, to Tanda to cross over to the Basti side to reach Kopia. For Mirzapur one proceeded along the alignment of the modern Grand Trunk Road and then crossed the Ganga at Agiabir to reach Mirzapur, from where again a route went straight to Manhej to reach Ayodhya and from there to Sravasti. The Tanda-Basti-Kopia alignment was also open along this route from Mirzapur. The importance of the Sravasti-Mirzapur alignment is that it linked up with the route which went all the way to the Deccan. Further, Varanasi was connected with the area of ancient Prayag both by the river and overland.

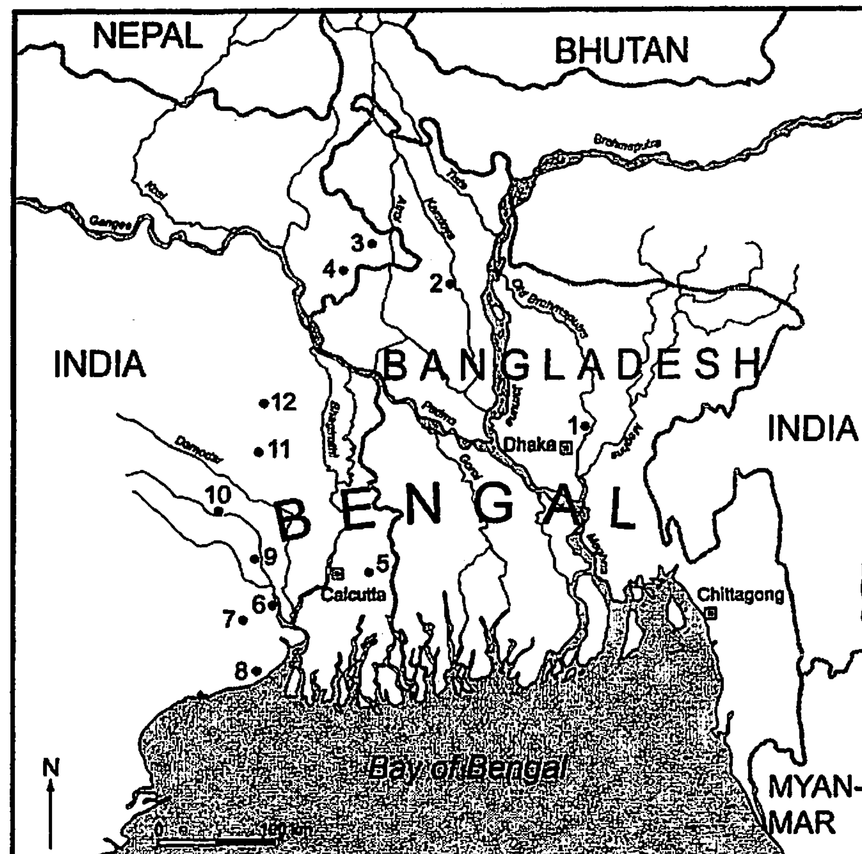
Apart from the route to Mirzapur and eventually the Deccan from Sravasti, a route led straight from Sravasti to the Piprahwa-Lumbini and Tilaurakot area of the Terai. There are no major archaeological sites along this stretch but one constantly keeps the outline of the Siwaliks on the left while traversing this route from the direction of Sravasti. From Sravasti a route also links up with Nepal via Chardah. The heart of Oudh around Lucknow is also open from Sravasti along an open, easily defined route which is also the modern road between these areas.

Mathura, as we have already noticed, was closely linked with Rajasthan, and toward the Ganga a route went past the Ganga crossing at Sankara to reach Ahichchhatra. Another route from Mathura to Ahichchhatra led through Atranjikhera, Soron, and Budaun. On the other hand, the sweep of the Ganga plain from Mathura downstream linked it with a plethora of riverbank sites: Bateshwar, Chakranagar, Reh, Musanagar, Kausambi, Bhita, and Prayag, among others. The links upstream must also have been important but that region is still outside the framework of my field-studies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

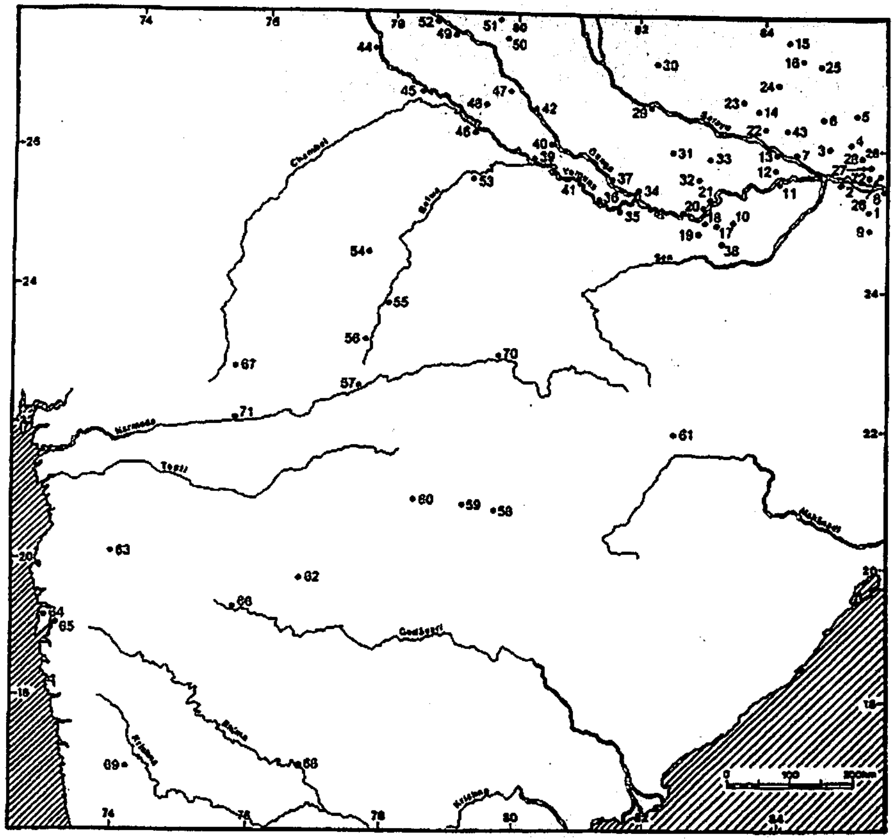
My historical-geographical field-surveys since 1991 have been supported by the Society for South Asian Studies (The British Academy, London), Cambridge University Travelling Expenses Fund and the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge University. I thank Professor Patrick Olivelle for asking me to contribute this chapter and Ms. Dora Kemp for the maps accompanying it.

FIGURE 1.1: URBAN CENTERS IN THE LOWER GANGA PLAIN



1. Wari-Bateshwar
2. Mahasthangarh
3. Bangarh
4. Kandaran
5. Chandraketugarh
6. Tamluk
7. Tildah
8. Bahiri
9. Dihar
10. Pokharna
11. Mangalkot
12. Kotasur

FIGURE 1.2: URBAN CENTERS IN THE MIDDLE AND UPPER GANGA PLAINS, CENTRAL INDIA AND THE DECCAN



1. Rajgir
2. Patna
3. Vaisali
4. Katragarh
5. Balirajgarh
6. Kopagarh
7. Manjhi
8. Champa
9. Devangarh
10. Nindaur
11. Buxar
12. Pakka Kot
13. Khairadih
14. Kopia
15. Tilaurakot
16. Piprahwa-Ganwaria
17. Chakia
18. Bhulli
19. Ahraura
20. Banaras
21. Bairant
22. Siswania
23. Bharat Bhari
24. Bhuiladih
25. Banarasi Kalan
26. Sikligarh
27. Jai Mangala Garh
28. Mangalagarh
29. Ayodhya
30. Sravasti
31. Manhej
32. Masaon Dih
33. Nahush-Ka-Tila
34. Jhusi (Prayag)
35. Bhita
36. Kausambi
37. Sringaverapura
38. Raja Nal-Ka-Tila
39. Musangar
40. Jajmau
41. Reh
42. Manikpur
43. Jharmatiya
44. Mathura
45. Bateshwar
46. Chakranagar
47. Kampil
48. Sankisa
49. Sankara
50. Ahichchhatra
51. Kashipur
52. Ahar
53. Erich
54. Tumain
55. Vidisa
56. Nandur
57. Ninnaur
58. Pauni
59. Adam
60. Kaundinyapura
61. Malhar
62. Bhokardan
63. Nasik
64. Sopara
65. Kalyan
66. Paithan
67. Ujjayini
68. Sannati
69. Kolhapur
70. Tripuri
71. Maheshwar
72. Naulagarh

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2

New Perspectives on the Mauryan and Kushana Periods

J. Mark Kenoyer

INTRODUCTION

As an archaeologist who has focused primarily on the first urbanism of the Indus valley, my interest in the Mauryan and Kushana periods arises from a need to understand what happened in the greater Indus valley after the decline and transformation of the Indus cities. I have never been satisfied with models that argued for a Dark Age lasting over one thousand years from around 1300 BCE to 300 BCE, ending with the rise of the Mauryan Empire. Over the past several decades, excavations and surveys in northern India and throughout Pakistan have begun to reveal the presence of substantial settlements that date to this interim period, demonstrating that in fact there was no Dark Age (Kenoyer 1995). Considerable surveys and limited excavations of Late Harappan (1900–1000 BCE) and Painted Grey Ware culture (1200–800 BCE) settlements have demonstrated that significantly large populations continued to occupy both the Indus and the Ganga Doab region (Joshi 1978; Shaffer 1993; Lal 1997). Early Northern Black Polished Ware (800–300 BCE) (Erdosy 1995b; Erdosy 1995a) and contemporaneous cultures have also been documented throughout these same regions, but since most sites of this period have remained occupied up until the present, it has not been possible to undertake proper settlement surveys.

Unfortunately, these discoveries do not seem to have made any impact on the well-entrenched models that attribute the second period of urbanism to the late Northern Black Polished Ware period (300–100 BCE) corresponding with the emergence of the Mauryan Empire (Allchin 1995a). The origin or stimulus for this urbanism is either attributed to Achaemenid influence from the west or from socio-economic and political developments in the middle and lower Ganga (Erdosy 1995a). There is little or no discussion of any contribution to this process from communities already present in the Punjab or the northern Indus valley regions. Similarly, the Kushana Empire is thought to have its stimulus from contact with the west and north, Iran and Central Asia, as well as the far-off Mediterranean with only minimal contributions from indigenous processes.

Recent discoveries from excavations and surveys in the northwestern regions of the Indus valley, as well as in the Punjab and Sindh, suggest that these earlier models of the Mauryan and Kushana urbanism need to be reexamined and possibly revised.

The well-known literary evidence for the presence of indigenous polities, as well as earlier archaeological evidence for the presence of substantial settlements and local cultural traditions also need to be reevaluated. For the purposes of this chapter, the main geographic focus will be on the Indus valley, and therefore I will limit my discussion to recent surveys and excavations conducted in Pakistan with the intention of expanding the scope of this study to the Doab region in the future.

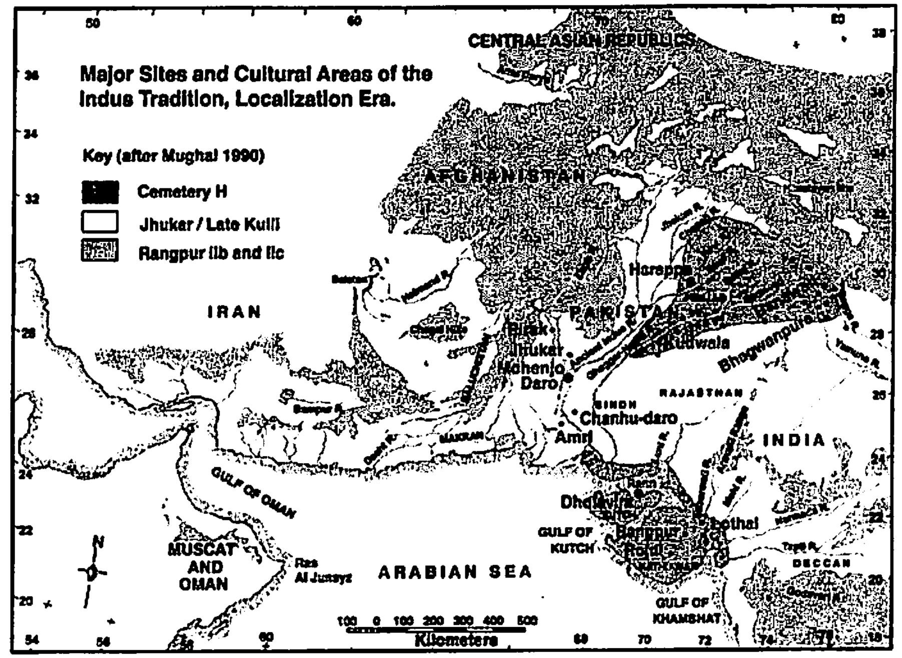
BACKGROUND

Urbanism and state development in the subcontinent of South Asia has traditionally been divided into two distinct phases that are linked by continuities in human populations, material culture, socioeconomic, ideological, and political factors. The initial phase of urbanism had its roots in the early Neolithic communities of Baluchistan and the Indus valley (circa 7000 BCE) and culminated in the rise of the Indus cities (circa 2600–1900 BCE). This long-term process has been referred to as the Indus Valley Tradition "persistent configurations of basic technologies and cultural systems within the context of temporal and geographical continuity" (Shaffer 1992). The extensive trade networks of the Indus urban centers linked the northwestern subcontinent with peninsular India, Central Asia, the Arabian Gulf region, and far-off Mesopotamia.

Scholars initially assumed that the decline of Indus urban centers resulted in a "Dark Age" with an absence of urban centers and complex sociopolitical organization throughout the Indus and upper Gangetic region (Wheeler 1968; Allchin and Allchin 1982). A careful reevaluation of earlier work on the protohistoric settlements of the Indus valley, combined with new excavations and surveys, is beginning to provide evidence for the continued existence of fairly large settlements and important legacies of the earlier Indus urbanism (Jarrige and Enault 1976; Shaffer 1993; Allchin 1995a; Kenoyer 1995; Mughal et al. 1996; Kenoyer 2003). Instead of a decline of urbanism, it might be better to characterize the change as a "localization" of socioeconomic and political interaction (Shaffer 1992; Kenoyer 1998; Kenoyer 2005) (figure 2.1).

The complex process of change after the Harappan period begins with the Late Harappan to Painted Grey Ware transition (1900–800 BCE) during which the social and political order of the Indus cities was transformed but clearly not obliterated. There is no evidence to suggest that the Indus cities were integrated through militarism, as was the case in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and they were not destroyed by military conquest. Multiple factors contributing to their transformation include changing river patterns and periodic floods that disrupted the agricultural base as well as an overextension of economic and political networks. Perhaps the most significant change is seen in the disappearance of key ideological symbols that indicate a breakdown of the major ideological framework that helped to integrate the diverse populations (Kenoyer 1998; Kenoyer 2005).

FIGURE 2.1. INDUS TRADITION: LOCALIZATION ERA



It is during this transition that we see the emergence of Vedic cultural traditions, characterized by a distinctive ideology and language. Based on the literary records such as the Vedas, along with the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* epics, the Punjab and northern Indus valley continued to be inhabited by numerous competing polities that have been variously identified as tribes, republics, or monarchies (Prakash 1994). Early attempts at connecting the literary references to actual sites were made by surveys and test excavations conducted by Cunningham (Cunningham 1924) and Banerji (Banerji 1984). Excavations at sites with Early Historic occupations and monuments such as Mohenjo-daro (Marshall 1931; Banerji 1984) and Harappa (Vats 1940) clearly demonstrated the extension of Kushana and later Gupta cultures into the core areas of the Punjab and Sindh. However, these discoveries were soon eclipsed by the discoveries at Taxila (Marshall 1951) and other sites in the Ganga region and south India. The study of Early Historic sites of the Indus valley was pushed even further into the background by a shift in the focus of research to the Proto-historic period and changes in national priorities. Although there continues to be an academic interest in understanding the history of the early Hindu and Buddhist rulers of this region by archaeologists in Pakistani universities, the focus of Pakistan's federal Department of Archaeology and Museums has shifted to sites that would help to reconstruct the introduction of Islam into this region. In the exploration and excavations of Aror, Bambhore, and Al Mansoora little interest was paid to the early levels that dated to the pre-Muslim period. Except for the occasional salvage excavation of Buddhist

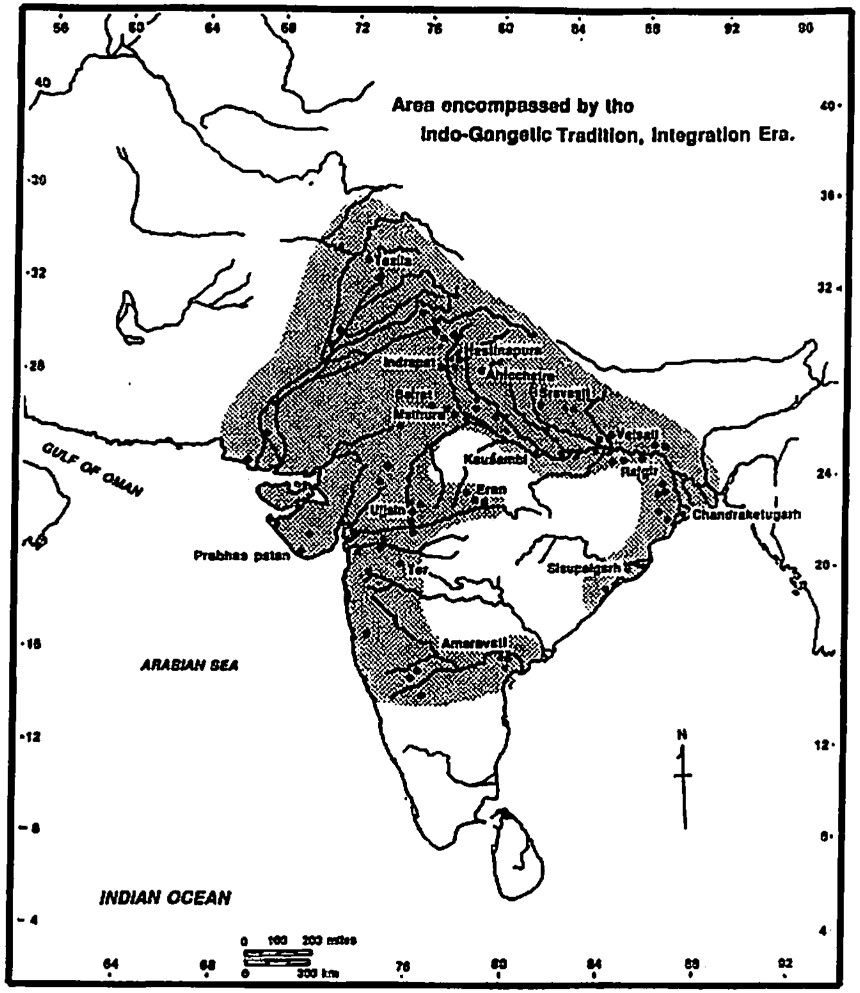
monasteries and *stūpas* to recover sculptures, there has been no serious work on the urban centers of the Early Historic period until the recent work (see below) at Akra, Bannu District (Khan et al. 2000), Charsada (Ali 1994), Gor Khutree-Peshawar (Durrani et al. 1997) and Hund, Attock district, by the Department of Archaeology, Peshawar University.

Unfortunately these recent efforts are not reflected in the most recent summaries of the Early Historic period (Allchin 1995b), where maps of northern India and Pakistan do not report any sites between Mathura and Taxila in the north, and no Early Historic sites are indicated in the regions of the Punjab and Sindh.

Even though many scholars have come to accept the importance of general continuities between the Indus cities and the Early Historic cities, in settlement planning, subsistence systems, technology, and even ideologies (Kenoyer 1995; Possehl 2002), there are no excavated settlements that provide a direct cultural link between the Late Harappan and Early Historic periods. However, such settlements probably do exist and remain buried beneath historical cities such as Lahore, Multan, Aror, and Sehwan. Even without trying, archaeologists have discovered important evidence for the interim period from excavations at sites such as Pirak in Sibi district (Jarrige and Enault 1976), as well as from burials in Quetta and Mehrgarh (Jarrige 1988; Jarrige and Hassan 1989). These sites and others to be discussed below indicate that large towns ruled by elites with considerable wealth continued to exist in this region, but the socioeconomic and political organization of the greater Indus valley region for this period remains to be fully understood.

In contrast, numerous excavations at sites in the Ganga valley provide continuities between the Late Harappan and Painted Grey Ware cultures, with subsequent occupations of the Northern Black Polished Ware culture (Roy 1983; Allchin 1995a; Dhavalikar 1999). Some of the archaeological evidence can be convincingly linked to cities and regions mentioned the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* epics as well as accounts in the Buddhist literature (Lal 1981; Lal 2002). If the serious imbalance in archaeological research between the Indus and the Ganga regions and the literary record itself is ignored, it is easy to conclude that there was a *dramatic* shift in the socioeconomic and political center from the Indus river valley to the Doab of the Ganga-Yamuna river valley during the period between 1900 and 800 BCE. It is this incomplete record that has led to the general assumption that there is in fact a second urbanism during the Mauryan period that is disconnected and unique from the earlier urbanism of the Indus. In the following section I will present evidence from regional surveys of archaeological sites in the Punjab and Sindh, followed by more detailed discussion of excavations at Taxila, Charsada, Peshawar, and Akra, that suggest we need to reevaluate this model.

FIGURE 2.2. IMPORTANT SITES MENTIONED IN TEXT



REGIONAL SURVEYS

Over the past fifty-five years the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, has been active in excavations and surveys in an attempt to document sites from all periods of history and prehistory. Most recently, a systematic survey of monuments in Punjab (Mughal et al. 1996) and Sindh has successfully identified large numbers of sites that fall within the time period addressed in this chapter. In summarizing their finds they have lumped sites of the Hindu-Buddhist period together with dates ranging from the fifth century BCE to the seventh century CE. For this time period there are 226 newly discovered and recorded sites in the Punjab

alone (Mughal et al. 1996). Some districts have more sites from this period than others, and future surveys are planned in order to make more intensive collections, and eventually excavations will be undertaken at key sites.

With excavation, the history of these settlements may be pushed back even earlier, since it is difficult to use surface collections of pottery to accurately date an occupation. For example, at Charsada (Wheeler 1962) and Taxila (Marshall 1951), excavations have shown the long use of specific diagnostic types of pottery, beginning as early as 550 BCE (or possibly 900 BCE; see discussion below) during the pre-Mauryan period and continuing as late as the end of the Mauryan period, circa 100 BCE. Furthermore, based on the recent discoveries at sites such as Akra, it is possible that some of the pottery which has previously been attributed to the pre-Mauryan period may in fact be much earlier, dating to around 900–790 BCE (Khan et al. 2000).

This early dating of the pottery is extremely important when evaluating the results of the recent surveys in the southern Punjab. In the area between the Chenab and Ravi, numerous sites have been discovered dating to the period between the second century BCE and the third century CE (Mughal et al. 1996 and Nasir 2001). One site that has been known for quite some time is Shorkot, Jhang district (figure 2.2) that is made up of numerous mounds and an impressive citadel covering an area that extends for over twenty hectares. The actual ancient settlement is probably much larger and extends beneath the modern town that surrounds the citadel. This site is reported as dating to the second century BCE and later (Mughal et al. 1996: 251 and Nasir 2001). Considerable collections of pottery and beads have been collected from Shorkot by local scholars such as Mr. Jamil Bhatti. Based on my personal examination of these artifacts and general comparisons with pottery and beads from Taxila as well as Kausambi, I would argue that the site dates to around 600 BCE if not earlier. Some of the pottery collected by Mr. Bhatti is also very similar to Late Harappan ceramics at Harappa and though he could not confirm where these sherds were discovered, it is possible that a Late Harappan settlement is present somewhere in the vicinity of the ancient city.

Another site that adds to the general picture is Bawani, situated some twelve kilometers north of Harappa (figure 2.2), and southeast of Shorkot on the southern bank of the Ravi. Informal study of pottery and beads from Bawani reveal strong similarities to those found from the early levels of Shorkot, with later styles indicating occupation through the Kushana and early medieval periods. The presence of numerous other ruined mounds roughly dated to the second century BCE (or earlier, as noted above) suggests the presence of fairly large populations in the Punjab as early as 600 BCE and on through the Mauryan and Kushana periods.

The revised chronology for Shorkot presented above is admittedly based on cursory examination and needs to be followed by systematic survey and excavation. However, I am confident that evidence for continuous occupation of this region from the Late Harappan through to the Kushana period will be discovered, confirming the descriptions presented in the literary record.

EXCAVATIONS AT TAXILA

The most significant recent excavations relating to the Early Historic period in Pakistan have been conducted in the Northwest Provinces and Taxila, which falls in the northern Punjab province. While some of these sites had been excavated in the past, others represent new explorations, and together they provide important new evidence for the communities living in this region just prior to and after the Mauryan period.

The site of Taxila, near Islamabad (figure 2.2) is one of the most important early cities in northern South Asia, with a substantial occupation beginning in the pre-Mauryan and Achaemenid periods, and continuing through the Kushana period and later (Marshall 1951). The earliest evidence for urbanism at Taxila was originally documented in the course of excavations of Bhir Mound. The lowest levels of this mound were been dated to around 400 BCE based on pottery and other artifact styles. This early occupation was thought to correspond to the end of the Achaemenid period, but there is very little evidence for Achaemenid cultural influence in the layout of the site or the pottery. Marshall's excavations of Bhir Mound defined four levels, with level IV being the oldest. It is in these levels that the earliest evidence for a *black burnished ware*, thought to be a local version of the Northern Black Polished ware, was discovered alongside local *red burnished ware pottery*. Discoveries of gray and black burnished pottery near Islamabad have been identified as Painted Gray Ware by Salim (Salim 1991), but personal examination suggests that they are not related to PGW and are more like the burnished black wares of Period IV at Bhir Mound. If this association can be confirmed, it would suggest that the earliest levels of Bhir mound represent a regional center with outlying smaller settlements. According to Marshall, evidence for Achaemenid influence at Bhir mound is seen in the presence of scaraboid beads (Marshall 1960) and silver bar coins with stamped designs. On the other hand, Allchin argues that the punchmarked coins from the early levels of Bhir Mound were developed locally (Allchin 1995b). He also argues that the presence of molded figurines and other features of material culture clearly point to Gangetic influence in the early establishment and continuing occupation of the Bhir Mound settlement at Taxila, which would correspond to epic traditions attributing the foundation of Taxila and Puskalavati to Bharata and the conquest of Taxila by Janamejaya (Allchin 1995b). An earlier critical study of pottery traditions from sites such as Charsada and Taxila as well as sites in the Swat valley also concluded that prior to the Achaemenid period, Gandhara was influenced by developments in the Gangetic region to the east (Vogelsang 1988). While there is no doubt about the important connections between Gandhara and the Gangetic polities further to the east as well as the Achaemenid polities to the west, I feel that both of these approaches ignore the importance of the Indus valley region itself.

Renewed excavations at Bhir Mound, Taxila, have revealed more information on site planning and urban facilities, specifically the nature of sewerage systems during the Mauryan and early Kushana periods (Khattak and Khan 2001). These new excavations reveal the presence of wells for drawing water and covered drains that run under houses and streets to remove sewerage water. These discoveries indicate that Marshall's observation of no wells in the city and no connected drains needs to be revised. Wells and drains are not a feature of early Chalcolithic sites in the Ganga

region, and are not present in the Achaemenid settlements of Afghanistan and Iran. The fact that wells and drains and drains to remove polluting water feature prominently in earlier Indus settlements would suggest that their continued presence in the northwest is the the result of long-term continuities in indigenous urban architectural traditions.

There is no question that the material evidence from Bhir Mound shows evidence for interaction with Achaemenid and Gangetic cultures. However, it is unlikely that the Achaemenid Empire or the early states of the Ganga-Yamuna Doab would have had much interest in this region if it were not already a productive urban society with considerable wealth and economic power. It is quite probable that this settlement was already an important regional center and that its urban character does not derive from either the west or the east but rather is the result of indigenous processes. The closest parallels are therefore with the earlier Indus cities, and even though we have no evidence for Harappan period urban settlements in the Taxila valley at this time, we do have evidence for Kot Dijian settlements at Hathial and Sarai Khola, that may have continued to be inhabited into the Harappan period.

EARLY HARAPPAN AND IRON AGES SETTLEMENTS

Not far from Bhir Mound, Taxila, is the site of Sarai Khola (figure 2.2), which was first established in the late Neolithic/Chalcolithic period around 3360 with occupation continuing on into the Early Harappan (Kot Dijian) period (circa 2460 to 2090 BCE). The site is chronologically contemporaneous with the Harappan period at Harappa (2600–1900 BCE). In the course of surface surveys adjacent to Bhir Mound, another Kot Dijian site was located in the 1980s on a small ridge called Hathial, dating to 2550–2288 BCE (Allchin 1995b). More recently three additional Kot Diji period sites have been discovered in the valley (Amanullah and Ghafoor 2001), bringing the total number of Kot Dijian sites to five.

No Harappan or Late Harappan sites have been discovered in the Taxila valley as a whole, but this can be explained in two ways. On the one hand it is possible that Kot Dijian period occupations in Taxila valley continued on into the Harappan period as is well documented at the site of Rehman Dheri (Durrani 1986; Durrani et al. 1991) in the Gomal plain. The well-planned settlement at Rehman Dheri had many features that were similar to those seen at Harappan urban centers, including massive mud brick walls and well laid-out streets oriented in the cardinal directions. The limited excavations did not locate any wells or drains, but brick drains have been found in the Kot Diji period site of Kalibangan in Haryana to the east (Lal 1979).

On the other hand, we do have evidence for the unexcavated Harappan site of Hisham Dheri near Rehman Dheri. This site indicates that Kot Dijian and Harappan communities actually lived side by side in some regions, and it is not unlikely that other Harappan period sites could be discovered in the course of systematic surveys in the Taxila valley. Such a pattern would not be surprising given the presence of Harappan settlers as far north as Shortughai, in Badakshan (Francfort 1989).

Settlements such as Sarai Kola and Hathial were strategically located along the north-south and east-west trade routes. The presence of numerous settlements and burials of the Gandhara grave culture (circa late second to first millennium BCE) (Stacul 1989; Stacul 2001) in the valleys of Swat and Chitral and the Iron Age burials at Sarai Khola (circa 1000 BCE?) (Halim 1970–71), indicate that the Taxila valley continued to be an important route connecting the Indus valley with regions to the north-south and east-west.

Subsequent populations in this valley began using a distinctive red burnished pottery that has been documented from the uppermost levels of Hathial, covering an area of approximately thirteen hectares. The size of the settlement is quite substantial and though we do not know much about the settlement plan or architecture, it has been possible to date the pottery to between 1000–400 BCE (calibrated) (Allchin 1995b). This is the crucial time period between the Late Harappan of the Indus valley and the Early Historic period, and hopefully excavations will soon be undertaken at Hathial to reveal the nature of this settlement. Until that happens however, there is evidence from other sites that can assist in our investigations.

CHARSADA REVISITED

The closest site with red burnished pottery is Charsada (Puskalavati) (Wheeler 1962), located on the northern route from Taxila to the upper Indus valley and the more isolated valleys of Swat and Chitral (figure 2.2). Wheeler dated the earliest levels of Charsada to around 550 BCE on the basis of relative stratigraphy and chronological comparisons with the famous Northern Black Polished Wares found in at Taxila and sites in the Ganga. One of the pottery types that he dated to around 550–300 BCE and labeled "soapy red ware" (Wheeler 1962) is the same type of pottery that Allchin has reported from Hathial and called "red burnished ware" (Allchin 1995b). If we use Allchin's dates for the red burnished ware, it would date the early levels of Charsada to around 1000–400 BCE instead of 550 BCE.

If this earlier date for Charsada can be confirmed through further excavations and radiocarbon dates, it would indicate that two important settlements—Charsada and Hathial—had become established along the important trade routes in this northwestern region long before the Achaemenid period. There is no evidence to suggest that the initial foundation of these settlements was influenced by cultural developments to the west (e.g., Kandahar, Afghanistan) (Allchin 1995b) or for that matter to the east in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Because of the fact that both sites eventually emerge as major urban centers during the subsequent Achaemenid and Mauryan periods, it is not unlikely that they were significant political and trade centers during their initial occupation. However, without extensive horizontal excavation and further regional exploration, it is not possible to determine if these two sites were simply prosperous towns or if they were in fact urban centers. If the later can be demonstrated, it would require a major revision of the current "accepted wisdom" that the Mauryan period represents a second emergence of urbanism.

Surveys conducted in the region around Charsada by Ihsan Ali from Peshawar University (Ali 1994) focus on the later Kushana period, but they do provide us some clues for directing future research. He notes that surface surveys did not reveal the presence of any prehistoric and protohistoric sites, but he also does not report any sites with "soapy red ware" (aka "red burnished pottery"), which is well documented in the

deep excavations of the Bala Hisar at Charsada (Wheeler 1962). He goes on to note that regions with high concentrations of Buddhist and Early Historic sites are still the most populated regions today due to the fertility of the soil and the presence of water sources. This suggests that most later settlements have been established on top of earlier settlements and, by extension, even earlier settlements with "soapy red ware" (1000–400 BCE) or Kot Dijian pottery (3000–2000 BCE) may be found buried under Buddhist period sites.

Although we do not have enough evidence to reconstruct regional settlement patterns for the initial phase of Charsada (or Hathial), Ihsan Ali's survey does provide a glimpse of the urban networks of the Early Historic period. He has divided the sites identified in his survey into two overlapping categories that are relevant to this chapter. Buddhist sites are identified by the presence of architectural and sculptural fragments derived from *stūpas* and monasteries and can be dated to between the first and fifth centuries CE. The site of Bala Hisar-Charsada-Puskalavati is lumped with this group, though it in fact begins earlier (possibly as early as 1000–400 BCE) and continues much later.

During the Buddhist period he identified four or five tiers of settlement hierarchy based on surface surveys of site size.

TABLE 2.1: SETTLEMENT SIZE, BUDDHIST PERIOD

Settlement Size	Number of Settlements
1. ≥ 40 ha	1 site - Bala Hisar - Charsada (40.45 ha for the mounded area, but the site is probably much larger)
2. 25 ha	2 sites
3. 10-12 ha	3 sites
4. 5-6 ha	4 sites
5. < 5 ha	61 sites (includes Shaikan Dherai)

Early Historic sites from the Kushana to the Hindus Shahis are lumped together and date from around first to eighth centuries CE. Although the settlement hierarchies of the Early Historic period are less clear due to an overlap with the Buddhist period, Ali notes that there is a clear decline in the number of settlements after the fifth century, which he attributes to the Huna invasions of this region.

TABLE 2.2: SETTLEMENT SIZE, EARLY HISTORIC PERIOD

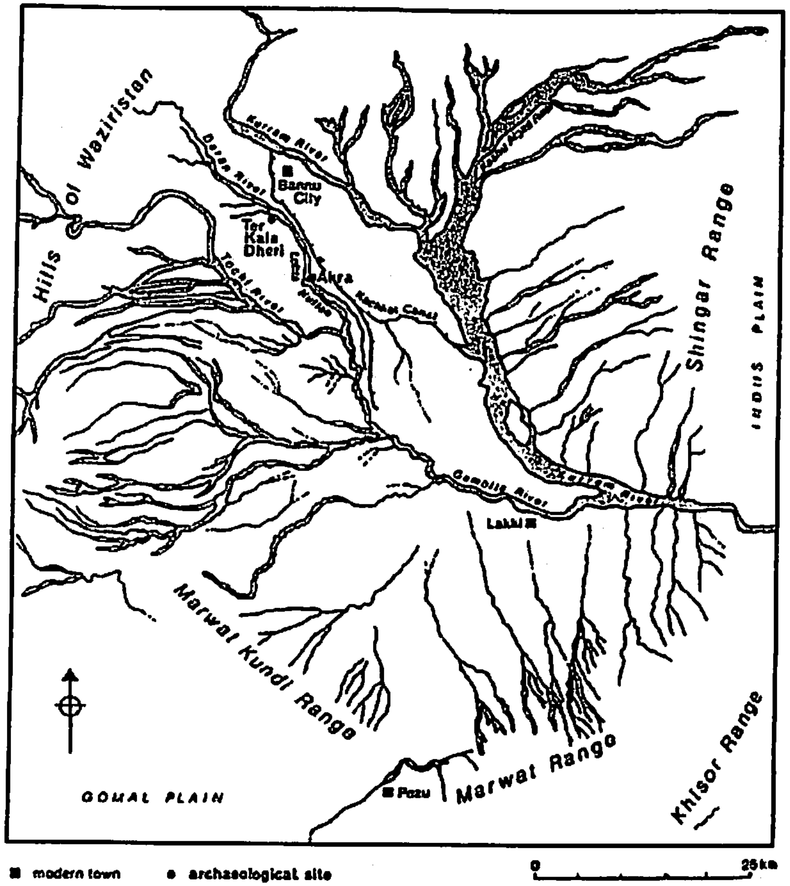
Settlement Size	Number of Settlements
1. 11-16 ha	3 sites
2. 5-10 ha	3 sites
3. < 5 ha	22 sites

The decrease in large settlements in this area may also relate to the emergence of Peshawar as a powerful fortified urban center. Ongoing surveys by Ali and his team in the Peshawar valley promise to expand the work that he began in the Charsada region, and will undoubtedly result in further refinement of current models.

PESHAWAR

The city of Peshawar is one of the largest and most well-known cities of the Northwest Frontier Province, with a rich history that can be traced back to the Early Historic period on the basis of inscriptions and other textual evidence. However, the archaeological confirmation of its early history has only recently begun. The late Dr. F. A. Durrani and his team from Peshawar University began excavations in Gor Khutree, one of the highest and most promising localities of the city, in 1992–93 and again in 1995–96 (Durrani et al. 1997). This area was selected as an optimal place for large-scale excavations that would also be able to reach the earliest levels of the city. Gor Khutree is thought to have been the place where the Buddha's alms bowl was kept, and others have identified it with the Vihara of the Kushana ruler Kanishka. During Mughal times the area was converted into a sarai and during the Sikh period it was turned into a residence and official headquarters of the governor. After many years of complex negotiations, the area inside the sarai was finally turned over to the Department of Archaeology, North West Frontier Province, for excavation and establishment of a museum. The initial excavations were able to reach the lowest levels (layers 18–20) of occupation dating to the last phase of the Achaemenid rule and the Mauryan occupation, dating to around the fourth century BCE. (Durrani et al. 1997). Due to the great depth of deposit, only a small area of the earliest levels was exposed, and it is possible that other parts of the city date to even earlier periods. Furthermore, the current dating for these early levels is based primarily on the pottery comparisons with sites such as Charsada and Taxila. In view of the discussions presented above, it is possible that the Peshawar site

FIGURE 2.3. BANNU DISTRICT AND EARLY HISTORIC SITES (KHAN ET AL. 2000)



actually dates much earlier, to the pre-Achaemenid period. If this can be confirmed through future excavations it would add one more piece to the growing evidence for indigenous urban centers in the northwest prior to the Mauryan period.

EARLY HISTORIC BANNU

Another recently excavated city that is relevant to this discussion is the site of Akra, Bannu Division, North West Frontier Province (figures 2.2 and 2.3). Artifacts purportedly collected from the surface of this site and currently housed in the British Museum include cylindrical seals dating to the second millennium BCE and pottery that indicates a continuous occupation until around 1000 CE, at the time of the

Ghaznavid invasion of this area (Khan et al. 2000).

Extensive deposits from the Iron Age have been exposed in the course of recent excavations, with artifacts such as etched carnelian beads and black-painted red ware pottery called "Bannu Black-on Red ware," that represent a unique local ceramic tradition. These levels have been dated to around 900–790 BCE (calibrated) (Khan et al. 2000) and provide concrete evidence that the site was an important regional center long before the period of Achaemenid invasion. A deep series of floor levels, pits, hearths, and other domestic debris was uncovered along with an impressive curving stone wall made of layers of large river cobbles. This stone wall was constructed above a lower, earlier wall made of carefully placed yellow mud lumps cemented together with a darker mud mortar. According to the excavators, these architectural features indicate that Akra was a major settlement of at least proto-urban standard, but that further excavations and surveys are needed to determine the nature of the regional settlement pattern during its initial phase. The absence of diagnostic Achaemenid artifacts in later levels and in the Bannu region in general has led the excavators to suggest that the city remained relatively independent even after the Achaemenid rulers extended their control into Gandhara (Khan et al. 2000).

Excavations at the nearby site of Ter Kala Dheri confirms the widespread use of the local ceramic type which has been called "Bannu Black-on-Red" and provides additional dates of 780–400 BCE and 1000–760 BCE (Khan et al. 2000). According to the excavators (Khan et al. 2000), the Bannu Black-on-Red ware pottery may have parallels with the occupations at Charsada and Hathial, where burnished red ware ceramics have been recovered dating to approximately the same time period (Allchin 1995b).

No major architectural features were discovered at this site, but the limited excavations did reveal distinct floors and pits as well as "a tiny fragment of what might be glass" (Khan et al. 2000). Upper disturbed levels contain pottery and figurines that are similar to the assemblages from Taxila (Sirkap) dating from the first century BCE to the second century CE as well as later periods.

Many important trade routes from the west run through Bannu to the Indus, and it is not surprising that there are early settlements that grow to be major urban centers in later periods (Khan et al. 2000). Even though there is no clear evidence for an Achaemenid political presence, traders would have moved through this region during the Persian hegemony of the northwest subcontinent. In fact, the earliest coin from the site dates to before the period of Alexander and indicates economic contacts with Achaemenid commercial centers in northern Pakistan and Afghanistan (Khan et al. 2000). Coins provide evidence for the continued importance of this region as a trade route, through the Mauryan (300–180 BCE), Indo-Greek (2nd century BCE), Indo-Scythian (80 BCE–50 CE) and Kushana times (10–360 CE) (Khan, et al. 2000). Kushano-Sasanian coins (circa 230–370 CE) from Afghanistan and northern Pakistan are also found at Akra. There is very little evidence of Buddhist influence in the Bannu Division, and though travelers such as Xuan Zang and Fa Hien report the presence of ruined monasteries and priests (Khan et al. 2000), only one possible stūpa was reported by Stein (Khan et al. 2000). The post-Kushana period in Bannu is not well known, but it is thought that since the region is lacking Buddhist monuments, it must have been dominated by Hindu rulers. Unfortunately, there is only one possible Hindu

monument preserved, and further excavations and surveys are needed to understand this period of its history (Khan et al. 2000).

CONCLUSION

In this brief and somewhat disconnected discussion of recent surveys and excavations in Pakistan, I have tried to present the case for a critical review of current models relating to the emergence and character of the second phase of urbanism in the northern subcontinent. Although the evidence is admittedly sparse and inconclusive, I feel that too much emphasis has been put on the Achaemenid expansion and the impact of Gangetic polities on the cultural developments in the Indus valley as a whole, and the northern cities in particular. On the basis of the evidence presented above I would argue for the presence of major polities in the Indus valley continuing from the Late Harappan right through to the Mauryan periods. Furthermore, given the important legacies of the Indus valley cities, I feel that we need to revise the way we look at the material culture and architectural traditions of the northern Indus valley. Instead of attributing everything to either the Gangetic region to the east or the Achaemenids to the west, we should assume that they emerge from indigenouse processes and are only later modified by contact with these other regions. If this model of localized development in the northwest can be confirmed through future excavations and research, it calls into question many of the time-honored models for the emergence of "Indian" culture as being derived from a Gangetic homeland. A more complex model with multiple centers of influence may turn out to be more appropriate. Originally I had hoped to expand this critique to the discussion of the Kushana cities and the third phase of urban growth, but will save that discussion for a future paper.

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3

Early Indian Art Reconsidered

Frederick M. Asher

By the early1920s, the chronology of early Indian art had been essentially established. This chronology, based on monuments assumed to be dated by inscription, has been widely accepted since then and modified little. It is, however, not nearly so secure and precise as generally imagined. This chapter reviews some of the scholarship that led to the establishment of the chronology and then interrogates the evidence and throws open the sequence generally assumed to be established.

THE CANONICAL SEQUENCE

Early Indian art is generally understood to begin with the reign of Aśoka (268–231 BCE), when monuments (or works of art, to adopt an entirely unsatisfactory term) were made for the first time since the late third millennium BCE in permanent material such as stone. Although some have suggested that the great stone pillars commonly attributed to this monarch were erected before his time (Irwin 1973), the symbolism of the capitals functions effectively with the inscriptions to suggest that they were made explicitly for the purpose of carrying Aśoka's inscriptions. Thus Aśoka, perhaps India's strongest and most charismatic ruler until Akbar, is widely recognized as the first identifiable patron of Indian art, a notion that does a great deal to set the stage for an almost exclusive focus on royal patronage in much of the scholarly writing on Indian art. The customary division of Indian art by ruling dynasty and the use of style categories designated by the ruling house (e.g., Gupta art or Chola art) imply royal patronage where none may exist. In fact, it is misleading to refer to Maurya art, that is, to use a dynastic term to define the time of creation of works that were made during the reign of a single Maurya king, that is, Aśoka. Using the term Maurya reifies the dynastic divisions of Indian art, a practice fraught with problems.

Aśoka's international contact is often used to explain his innovations, particularly for the monolithic pillars he erected at the site of Buddhist monasteries, for the naturalistic style of the animal capitals and for the floral motifs on the pillars' abaci. While it may feel uncomfortable to accept extra-Indian sources for major changes in the history of Indian art, it is undeniable that many of the most inventive periods for the history of Indian art coincide with times that India played a major role in global systems. Not all of the works, however, that are commonly attributed to Aśoka's time can, in fact, be dated to his reign with any real confidence (Asher and Spink 1989).

Next in the canonical sequence come the *stūpa* railing from Bhārhut and the one in a similar style surrounding Stūpa 2 at Sanchi, both almost always ascribed to the Śunga period (185–172 BCE). The reliefs of these railings—many of them explicitly Buddhist on the Bhārhut railing but none illustrating a Buddhist narrative on the one at Sanchi—are characterized by a style quite different from that of the Aśokan pillar capitals. That is, instead of the volumetric and relatively naturalistic well-modeled forms, the reliefs of these railings tend to have planar surfaces and angular outlines, though with extensive use of line to substitute for the modeling of sculptures on the Aśokan columns. That sudden and quite dramatic shift in form is generally explained either by the relatively insular nature of India during the Śunga period, that is, the loss of external contacts that might have stimulated the naturalistic forms, or by the distinction between art patronized by royalty on one hand and art popularly patronized on the other. Although it is true that some of the most dramatic changes in Indian art are apparent at times when India has been central to a global or regional system, it appears excessively colonialist to associate naturalism with an infusion of "foreign influence" or even foreign manufacture and, conversely, to associate stylization with those periods during which India reverts to a seemingly isolated state. Other dynamics must be sought to explain the seeming sudden change after the time of Aśoka if the canonical sequence of monuments is correct.

The sculptures of the railing reconstructed around the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya are also conventionally attributed to the Śunga periods though generally later in the time of Śunga rule than the railings of Sanchi Stūpa 2 and Bhārhut. This railing's sculptures are very much more modeled and in other ways appear more liberated from the stone on which they are carved than the sculptures of Bhārhut and Sanchi Stūpa 2.

Early in the time of what is often considered the subsequent dynasty, the Andhra or Satavahana Dynasty commencing circa 72 BCE, are the gateways of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi. Unlike the other railings, this one is devoid of relief decor. Rather, on the Sanchi Stūpa, the densely carved sculptural adornment is confined to the four gateways. Like the Bhārhut and Bodhgaya railings, but unlike the nearby railing around Stūpa 2 at the site, the gateways portray scenes from the life of the Buddha and his previous lives, that is, the Jatakas, in addition to the rich floral decor of the uprights' sides and the guardian figures (*dvarapalas*) on the inner jambs of all four gateways. Usually it is asserted that the southern gateway was first carved, followed in close succession by the remaining three gateways.[1] The style is seen as an evolution from that of the Bodhgaya railing, now with more densely carved relief, a sense of both volume and space, and abundant detail on individual figures.

With the accession of the Kushana Dynasty, probably early in the second century, major changes take place in the direction of Indian art, again reinforcing the notion of dynastic authority resulting in royal authorship of the art. The anthropomorphic Buddha image is understood to have been introduced early in Kushana times. Kushana art, made extensively in the region of Gandhara and at

[1] Fergusson (1876: 114) seems to have been the first to argue for this sequence. Earlier writers on Sanchi such as Cunningham (1854) presented the gateways in a different order and argued for no particular chronological sequence.

Mathura, but not elsewhere in northern India, placed emphasis on the figure itself, independent of a context suggested in relief carving. The change is more than iconographic. It is fundamentally conceptual, and if the visual evidence is accepted, the change appears to have had the same broad acceptance as the abrupt stylistic break between Aśoka's art and that of the subsequent period.

Other works are fitted into this north Indian paradigm. For example, the rock-cut sanctuaries of the western Deccan plateau are often assigned dates relative to the dates of monuments discussed above, and epigraphic evidence, when it is available, is made to conform to the stylistic understandings. Similarly, the reliefs from southeast India, that is from Andhradeśa, are often viewed in the context of north Indian works and generally assumed to follow their lead. Innovation is not very often attributed to the artists working in the south. For example, the inclusion of anthropomorphic images of the Buddha at sites such as Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda is assumed to draw inspiration from north India, especially from Mathura.

Although most who advocate this paradigm consciously or inadvertently give primacy to reading the image as text and making the epigraphic evidence conform to the stylistic evidence, both stylistic and epigraphic evidence may be more complicated than often imagined. That is the case with the writers discussed below, ones who shaped our understanding of early Indian art. That view, like the canonical chronology presented here, continues to be reiterated by writers up to the present day.[2]

EARLY INDIAN ART: ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPT

While many of the earliest writers on India's antiquities had focused on single sites, there was nevertheless a movement to develop systematic overviews.[3] The motivations were somewhat diverse but nevertheless related. Alexander Cunningham, founder of the Archaeological Survey of India, argued in 1861 for government support of a survey of India's antiquities as a parallel to the great Trigonometric Survey, which mapped India's geography (Cunningham 1871–1887, vol. 1: i–viii). The goal for James Fergusson, writing at about the same time though by then settled in England and working with the newly developed tool of photographs that he had amassed during his tenure in India, was to link India's architecture with that of the rest of the world in a great four-volume study of world architecture.[4] Just as Cunningham saw his project as parallel to the study of India's topography, Fergusson saw his as a parallel to the Orientalist scholarship that had focused exclusively on texts, while at the same time rendering for India a tangible history that no written record, to his mind, provided. In fact, this cantankerous Scotsman who came to India to work with his family firm didn't really trust texts or the scholars who relied on them rather than on the first-hand

[2] See, for example, the chronology proposed by Willis (2000: 55–62). And I myself have recently reiterated it (Asher 2003: 29–45).

[3] For an extensive discussion of the individuals who shaped the study of Indian art, see Chandra 1983.

[4] Fergusson 1865. In fact, however, the project was somewhat more modest than the title suggests. It covered only the ancient and medieval periods.

study of India's ancient monuments, which he considered more reliable.[5] His study of Indian architecture (Fergusson 1876) was intended as a volume of his earlier *History of Architecture in All Countries* (Fergusson 1865), and remarkably his proposed sequence for early Indian monuments was not far from what became the canon: Following the pillars of Aśoka, he assumed the Bodhgaya railing to be contemporary, concurring with Cunningham's assignment of the Bodhgaya railing to Aśoka's time largely because this Maurya emperor is reported to have held the Bodhi tree in such esteem that he gave his daughter a branch of the tree to plant in Sri Lanka as part of a conversion effort; then in Fergusson's chronology comes the Bhārhut railing, dated to the time of the Śunga dynasty on the basis of epigraphic evidence. Finally, Fergusson dates the gateways of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi to the time of King Satakarni of the Andhra Dynasty, assuming the date to be circa155 BCE.

It was, however, the historian Vincent Smith who discerned a distinctive style during the age of Aśoka. Workmanship of that time, he asserts, has a precision and accuracy that has never been surpassed, even in Athens, often for these earlier writers on India's art the touchstone for measures of quality (Smith 1911: 59). While others before him had argued that Aśoka's pillars must have been produced by foreign artists working for Aśoka, apparently thinking of the artists Darius had imported from many different countries for work on Persepolis as a model, Smith argues that the works are "purely Indian" (Smith 1911: 60), a refrain maintained in much writing on Indian art, even to the present, for those who continue to wage a nationalist campaign. Beside the pillars, Smith attributes to Aśoka's time several large-scale free-standing figural works, for example, a female figure from Besnagar and a colossal male from Parkham, which he, like so many others, described as polished even though it is not. Apparently he started with the assumption that it dates to Maurya times and that Maurya works are polished, so this one should be as well.

Post-Aśokan sculpture, as Smith describes it, starts with the Bodhgaya railing, which, as he notes, formerly had been attributed to Aśoka's reign but has been proven, he says, to date from Śunga times. This is followed in his discussion by the Bhārhut railing, which he also attributes to the Śunga period on the basis of an inscription recording the erection of the eastern gateway during the rule of the Śunga Dynasty (Smith 1911: 70). Finally in the sequence, he discusses the Sanchi gateways, though he assigns them a date between 150 and 100 BCE, which would make them just about contemporary with the Bodhgaya and Bhārhut reliefs. So it is more the order of his presentation than any evidence he offers that results in the implication of a sequence. He notes that all critics agree that the southern gateway is the earliest of the four, though he does not offer the reasoned explanation for the sequence that Fergusson proposes. Mostly, he is concerned with the subject matter of the reliefs and what he sees as a startling decline in the artists' skill in a relatively short time, about a century by his chronology, as evidenced by a comparison of the lions on this gateway's impost and those of the Aśokan column that stood immediately in front of it. Other sculptures he assigns to this period on the basis of their appearance relative to that of the works at

5 His criticism of Rajendralala Mitra for writing from an intimate knowledge of text but less first-hand familiarity with monuments is delivered with both vitriol and considerable condescension that is almost racist in tone. See Fergusson 1884.

Bodhgaya, Bhārhut, and Sanchi. For example, Smith (1911: 83) suggests that a couple of sculptures from Mathura were much like the Bhārhut style, as are some of the Amaravati sculptures (1911: 86), while the Bhaja sanctuary's sculptures are related by Smith to those at Bodhgaya (1911: 86).

John Marshall, writing in 1922, was the first scholar to suggest the canonical sequence of early Indian art. After contemplating the absence of monuments prior to the third century, he focuses on the works of Aśoka's time, contrasting the Sarnath capital with the huge male figure from Parkham, attributing the former to foreign influence and the latter to indigenous workmanship: "While the Sārnāth capital is thus an exotic, alien to Indian ideas in expression and in execution, the statue of Pārkham falls naturally into line with other products of indigenous art and affords a valuable starting point for the study of its evolution" (Marshall 1922: 622). Although he does not explicitly suggest that the pillars and their capitals are the products of foreign artists working in India, he implies as much when he refers to the "contrast between Indian and foreign workmanship exhibited by these sculptures" (Marshall 1922: 622).

Within the next period, the period of Śunga power, he sees the Bhārhut railing as the most notable monument, followed apparently in time (rather than importance, though he is ambiguous about this) by the Bodhgaya railing. The great vitality of the period he attributes to Bactrian dominion up to the Punjab, suggesting that, as a result, Hellenic ideas flowed eastward in an ever-increasing volume, providing inspiration for the Indian artists. At the same time, he suggests, stone increasingly replaced wood as the medium for architecture (Marshall 1922: 624). Marshall sees the use of Kharoshthi script for a few inscriptions on the sole surviving Bhārhut gateway and the non-Indian appearance of some faces as evidence for artists from the northwest, where "thanks to western teaching, the formative arts were then in a more advanced state, and . . . these sculptors were responsible for the better class of reliefs, the inferior work being done by the local artists of Central India" (Marshall 1922: 625). Similarly, the Bodhgaya reliefs are assumed to have resulted from "Indian sculptors borrowing freely from the hybrid cosmopolitan art of Western Asia, in which Greek and Scythic, Persian and Mesopotamian cultures were blended," and this alien inspiration at least in part accounts for "the important progress since the time when the Bhārhut reliefs were executed" (Marshall 1922: 626). The date of the Bodhgaya railing, in part determined by observing that the reliefs "fall short" of those on the gateways of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi, is corroborated by inscriptions added by the queens of kings Indramitra and Brahmamitra.

The gateways of Sanchi's Great Stūpa are recognized as dating next. Marshall asserts that the earliest of them is the south gateway, followed in chronological order by the north, east, and western ones "as demonstrated by the style of their carvings" (Marshall 1922: 628). Curiously, however, he never assigns a date to the gateways despite his close reading of their style.

Similarly, he skirts the issue of assigning dates to the rock-cut sanctuaries, noting mostly that the earliest are Bhaja, Kondane, and Pitalkhora, plus Cave 10 at Ajanta; these are followed by the main sanctuary at Bedsa and Cave 9 at Ajanta; finally in Marshall's chronology comes Nasik and then Karle. Based on the sense that the Nasik chaitya was excavated at the beginning of the second century BCE, i.e., the time he believes the Andhra king Krishna reigned, he assigns the four earliest caves to the

close of the third century BCE, the cave at Bedsa to the first or second decade of the second century BCE, those at Nasik to about 160 BCE and the one at Karle to about 80 BCE. At the same time, however, he acknowledges problems with this chronology and concludes that "it is apparent that the chronology of these caves needs complete revision" (Marshall 1922: 637). That was a task Walter Spink undertook in a 1958 article published in the *Art Bulletin*.

Although Marshall's piece does not cover the Kushana period, he reflects the customary European view of the time in the several observations he puts forward. First, he acknowledges the difficulty of establishing a chronology for the art of Gandhara, but suggests that the earlier a work, the more closely it approximates a Hellenistic work; that is, he assumes strong initial Hellenistic influence followed by gradual Indianization of the forms. Second, he asserts that the Gandhara school "had taken shape long before the Kushanas came upon the scene" (Marshall 1922: 648). Thus in the contest for priority between Gandhara and Mathura, there is no apparent question in Marshall's mind that Mathura followed the lead of Hellenistic-inspired Gandhara.

Coomaraswamy's interests in his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927a), as in his other writings, is less to present historical arguments for the dates of works than to consider their form and the spirit they represent. Nevertheless, he presents a dynastic history of early Indian art, one that recapitulates the canonical chronology. That is, following the Maurya period, to which he assigns the Parkham figure as well as a female from Besnagar, he dates the Bhārhut railing circa 150 BCE (1927a: 31), the Bodhgaya railing not far from 100 BCE (1927a: 32), i.e., both within the Śunga period, and the gateways of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi to the opening years of the Andhra period, circa 72–25 BCE (1927a: 35). His discussion of Kushana sculpture seeks to show the difficulty of demonstrating the priority of Gandhara art and its subsequent impact on the art of Mathura, a case he made in far greater detail the very year he published his book (Coomaraswamy 1927b).

It was, however, the German art historian Ludwig Bachhofer who most meticulously put forth the arguments for what has become the canonical view, and in doing so essentially defined a period of Indian art history, that is, early Indian art.[6] Writing just two years after Coomaraswamy, Bachhofer drew upon his training as a student of the Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, one of the most influential figures of all art history. Wölfflin's concern with principles of stylistic change shaped the way Bachhofer wrote and thought. Bachhofer was a formalist who, following Wölfflin's contrasts between Renaissance and Baroque art and the dichotomies of style that he identified, saw similar contrasts in Indian art, though not always chronological ones.[7]

[6] Bachhofer 1929a and 1929b. The English version of the book, 1929a, is a translation of the German version, 1929b.

[7] I am indebted to Eve Sinaiko for information on Bachhofer's biography. Born in 1894 in a Bavarian Catholic family, Bachhofer married a Jew from Freiburg, Hilda Nelson. Following his training with Wölfflin, he was offered a professorship at the University of Munich on the condition that he divorce his Jewish wife. The Nuremberg Laws, which led to this conditional offer, were sufficient to induce his flight to the

Thus, like so many art historians both during the time Bachhofer wrote and subsequently, virtually to the present day, Bachhofer was concerned with what the discipline calls stylistic evolution, and therefore committed much of his attention to determining the date of works of art based on their stylistic appearance. In the end, however, his chronology was not much different from that of others writing about the same time, although opinions inserted in his text poignantly reflect the colonialist responses of his time to both India and Indian art.

WHAT WE KNOW

In fact, we know rather less than the canonical view might suggest. Let us take each of the major monuments and test the assumptions.

That the pillars attributed to Aśoka are really from his time is a virtual certainty despite arguments that they date earlier (Irwin 1973). The author of the pillars' inscriptions, Piyadasi, is known to be Aśoka from the Maski inscription in present-day Karnataka. Moreover, the symbolism of the pillars and their capitals, appropriate for these royal edicts, suggests that the pillars were made to carry the inscriptions. Other works attributed to this time, however, may very well date later (Asher and Spink 1989). If that is the case, then from the time of Aśoka we are left with a single type of monument, the pillars. In other words, the notion that there was a Maurya imperial style may not be far from the mark. The corrective may be that it was not so much Maurya as, more specifically, Aśokan, and that stone may have been used exclusively for the production of the pillars, not for other types of sculptural works.

Stūpa 2 at Sanchi is often accepted as earlier than Bhārhut, the first major monument following the Maurya period, although there is no clear inscriptional evidence to secure its date. That is largely because the execution of the railing reliefs appears crude or primitive to many, not only by contrast to the more famous Great Stūpa at the site but even by contrast to the Bhārhut railing (Taddei 1996). Its location, however, on an artificial terrace below most of Sanchi's hilltop monuments, and the fact that it enshrines the remains of relatively lesser personages—for example, by contrast to the Great Stūpa at the site, which is said to enshrine the remains of the Buddha himself, or Stūpa 3 there, which is said to enshrine the remains of two of the Buddha's best-known disciples—makes this monument an odd candidate for the earliest *stūpa* with a decorated railing, a form that continued at least into the first century and maybe later. Beside the form of the sculptures, there is one other clue to the date of Sanchi Stūpa 2, that is, inscriptions by a banker of Achavada, Nagapiya, recording his donation of a pillar of this *stūpa* railing and also, very possibly, two uprights of the railing around Sanchi's Great Stūpa. Although some argue that Nagapiya, the donor of the pillar at Stūpa 2, is not the same as the donor of the same name who provided two pillars of the Great Stūpa (Willis 2000: 59), I would guess that they start with the assumption that the two monuments must be considerably

United States, where he assumed a position at the University of Chicago in 1935. He died in 1976.

distant in date and could not possibly have a donor in common. The evidence, then, is marshaled to fit the assumption.

There are, however, two alternative assumptions that must be considered even though they defy a notion fundamental to art history, namely, that two clearly distinctive styles could not prevail simultaneously at a single location. First, the railing of Sanchi Stūpa 2 could be a product of the Maurya period, that is, when the Great Stūpa was established though before its present railing and gateways were constructed. The Mediterranean motifs, which include themes closely associated with Classical art, such as a man riding a female centaur and a panel likely illustrating Hercules battling the Nemean lion, as well as floral forms of Classical origin, recall motifs on the abaci of Aśoka's pillars, even though the Sanchi Stūpa 2 style is very distant from that of the pillars. Second, the railing could be virtually contemporary with the gateways of Sanchi's Great Stūpa, differing however in both subject matter and style. If we allow for the possibility of contemporaneous workshops that produced sculpture in highly distinctive styles, neither possibility can be entirely eliminated. We return to this issue as critical for understanding the dynamic of artistic production in early India.

The date for the Bhārhut railing is derived from an inscription on the sole surviving gateway. It records the gift of the gateway itself, as well as the stone carving—which carving isn't clear—and the plinth (perhaps of the whole *stūpa*) during the reign of the Sugas (*Suganam Raje*), widely assumed to mean during the reign of the Śungas. The donor is identified as Dhanabhuti, and his immediate ancestry is recorded (Lüders 1963: 11–12). It is generally accepted that Dhanabhuti was a Śunga feudatory. However, no titles preface *Suganam Raje*, and, further, no specific overlord is identified. So the inscription provides at best a tenuous indication of date. In fact, Dhanabhuti's putative role as a Śunga feudatory is made all the more tenuous by the fact that his father, Gotiputra Agaraju, identified in this inscription, struck coins as an independent monarch ruling an area just north of Bhārhut when, in fact, the Śungas themselves did not strike coins.[8] In any event, if the phrase *Suganam Raje* does mean during the reign of the Śungas, this inscription would be virtually unique in citing the entire dynasty rather than a specific king of that house. Thus the Śunga date of the Bhārhut gateway and railing cannot be taken as certain.

The railing at Bodhgaya reconstructed around the Mahabodhi temple—not necessarily its original location (Chakravarty 1997: 1)—is commonly understood as the next major monument after the Bhārhut railing. Its date is generally derived from inscriptions recording gifts made by Kuramgi and Nagadeva, queens of Indragnimitra and Brahmamitra, whose coins Bachhofer and others date no earlier than the first century BCE. Bachhofer, then, like most others, more specifically assigns the railing to the first part of that century, that is, to 100–50 BCE.[9] In fact, however, we have no dates for these kings, and we know nothing about their association with the Śunga Dynasty, if they had one at all. Indragnimitra simply is otherwise unknown. We know kings Indramitra and Agnimitra but no king with the composite name Indragnimitra. And a king named Brahmamitra issued coins from Mathura, but we know virtually nothing about his date or his dynastic affiliation.

The Bodhgaya sculptures are more modeled than those of Bhārhut and therefore appear more three-dimensional, although they lack the linear detail of Bhārhut images. Not only is detail lacking on the individual figures but even the narratives are depicted in a much more abbreviated fashion, with fewer figures and a more cursory setting. As Bachhofer comments, "the figures still appear to be unsteady and without sufficient firmness, while the reliefs of a narrative character, perhaps in a higher degree than hitherto, appear to be dependent upon the ground level. In Bodh Gayā, the artist, rightly conscious of his own limited gifts, avoids the great scenes with their abundance of personnel and equipment" (1929a: 30). Despite that, he sees, as most following him do as well, a date for the Bodhgaya railing after the creation of the Bhārhut railing.

Bachhofer treats the sculptures of the Bodhgaya railing, as he does virtually all the other sculptures he discusses, as devoid of context but rather primarily as form. The context may be cultural and religious, for the works, including their form, serve as documents of the past that can be read and interpreted much like written documents, although sculptures are often more closely datable than written texts. These works of art do not simply reflect the culture in which they were produced—a complex notion in itself because it raises the question of which culture: the artists', the local residents', or the many and often diverse pilgrims'. They also, however, shape culture as any public monument does and, often, is intended to do.

The Great Stūpa at Sanchi as presently reconstructed is certainly the most spectacular monument of the period. It is commonly dated on the basis of an inscription on the south gateway indicating that the top architrave was the gift of Ananda, supervisor of the artisans of King Satakarni (Marshall and Foucher 1940: 342, no. 398). Generally this is assumed to be Satakarni I, third monarch of the Satavahana dynasty, whom many scholars date about 50 BCE (Thapar 2002: 226), though some recent scholarship places his fifty-six-year reign from 10 BCE to 45 CE (Shastri 1998: 56). That would date the gateways of this monument sometime during a span of nearly 100 years, not a very precise date for a work of art but very possibly the closest we can date any monument of the period immediately following Maurya rule.

Bachhofer designates the period of Sanchi's production, that is, the time during which the Great Stūpa's gateways were erected, as a Golden Age, a term more commonly ascribed to the Gupta age, imagined as a glorious period concluding the time between the empires. He offers no reason for this, and in truth there's nothing significantly different about this monument except its style or about the nature of patronage at this time to warrant such a designator unless he is thinking about the vast

8 See chapter 4 by Shailendra Bhandare in this volume.

9 Bachhofer 1929a: 20. Bloch 1908–09: 147 dates the railing to the mid-second century BCE, about the same date as the Bhārhut railing. He asserts that Indragnimitra and Brahmamitra were either contemporaries of or belonged to the Śunga Dynasty, a notion that would make little sense in terms of patronage. Could a monument erected in a single campaign but for the much later additions of the Gupta period have received patronage during the reigns of two different monarchs?

territory ruled by the Satavahanas by contrast to that of the Śungas, if they can be designated an empire at all.[10]

"By the aid of a criticism of style, it can be easily established that the Southern gate was the first to be erected, followed by the Northern, Eastern and Western gates," Bachhofer asserts (1929a: 32), the same order Fergusson much earlier (1876: 114) had proposed. He sees a series of experiments and solutions to issues, attributing to the Sanchi artists a struggle with representation comparable to that of the most cerebral of the Renaissance masters. Thus here, as elsewhere, he assumes that stylistic variation reflects a chronological difference and that a linear evolution of style, one shared by artists everywhere at every time, can be presumed.

Bachhofer (1929a: 43) uses terms characteristic of Wölfflin to describe the style, for example, noting that "a severely closed form" was achieved, perhaps the reason he sees this period as a Golden Age, commensurate with that of Classical Greece and the Renaissance, whose art Wölfflin (1904) had termed Classical.

Bachhofer (1929a: 44) does, however, recognize the predilection of early Indian artists to group scenes according to where they take place rather than presenting them in narrative sequence. He refers to this as the law of topographical arrangement, which, he observes, Foucher had "discovered" at Ajanta, much as one might discover a scientific law. Many instances of this organization could be cited: for example, the Vidhura Pandita Jataka at Bhārhut. There the terrestrial scenes are located at the base of the railing upright, those that take place in the Himalayas are in the middle, and those occurring in the celestial abode are at the top, even though one scene occurs at the beginning of the story and others at the conclusion. But perhaps the best example is the panel represented on the southern upright of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi's east gateway. The uppermost panel illustrates the Dream of Maya, a familiar scene that would have served to locate the other scenes at Kapilavastu; the rest of the panel, then, illustrates events surrounding the Buddha's return to Kapilavastu, his birthplace, events that took place long after Maya's dream. In other words, regardless of when in the Buddha's life the events took place, they are clustered together because they occurred at a single location. Those writing early in the twentieth century, when Darwinian laws profoundly impacted humanistic disciplines such as art history, chose to see this mode of representation as a scientific law. More likely, however, it follows the practice of public performance, a very important stimulus to India's visual artists. Although evidence for premodern performance practice is lacking, performance in modern times often moves from place to place, each one identified with a specific geographic location. For example, the Ramlila performance at Ramnagar shifts over an area of more than thirty square miles, which recapitulates the geography of the Ramayana. Individual sites have permanent identities, and the events that are supposed to have taken place at those locations always require that the audience and actors shift to these sites.[11]

[10] An argument made by Shailendra Bhandare in chapter 4 in this volume.

[11] My thanks to Philip Lutgendorf for the following: When the Lila assumed its final form in the ninteenth century, permanent locations were built for the various sites, creating a kind of "theme park" over an area of many (more than thirty) square miles. Within this area, which recapitulates the geography of the Ramayana, individual sites

Others, more recently, have been concerned with the subject of the Sanchi reliefs, as well as earlier ones such as those at Bhārhut, inspiring a lively debate. Susan Huntington (1990), for example, has argued that the reliefs depict reenactments of the events of the Buddha's life and, presumably, his previous lives, while Vidya Dehejia (1991) has argued that they depict the narratives themselves. There may be no easy resolution to the dispute, although label inscriptions such as those at Bhārhut give no suggestion that reenactments of the stories are intended. It may be that the artists drew inspiration from contemporary theater, as artists have in other parts of the world, but fully intended their visual narratives to recount the primary episodes.

In essence, Bachhofer, like others, sees a foreign-inspired Maurya style followed by a neat linear evolution, "the line of development running from Bārhut by way of Bodh Gayā to Sānchī" (1929a: 30). Benjamin Rowland followed this sense of evolution and applied the term "Early Classic" to the period because "it marks a gradual emergence from an archaic phase of expression towards final maturity, in much the same way that Greek sculpture of the Transitional Period (480–450 BCE) bridges the gap between the Archaic and the Great Periods" (1953: 51). This notion very closely follows Wölfflin's sense that cycles of stylistic evolution repeat themselves not only within cultures but across cultures, as if following scientific laws.

THE SOLUTIONS

If one thinks of ancient India as a coherent political and cultural entity, it is appropriate to seek a continuous evolution of art. The model then ought to follow that of, say, ancient Greece from archaic styles through Hellenistic ones or Italian styles from the late Medieval period through the Baroque. But the dynamics may be different. First, cultural boundaries may have restricted the travel of artists. Language and other cultural practices, for example, may have limited the area over which artists could comfortably gain commissions, if they traveled at all and did not work at a central location, transporting the finished products. We can be reasonably sure that most of the Aśokan pillars were centrally produced and then transported to the site of erection. The common stone alone suggests centralized work.[12] Second, we need to note a distinction between the patronage and function of the Aśokan works on one hand and those of the immediately subsequent periods on the other. That is, the Aśokan works were intended for a specific royal purpose, while the subsequent major monuments

have permanent identities, and the events that are supposed to have taken place at those locations always require that the audience and actors shift to these sites.

[12] I am, however, not persuaded that all of the pillars are carved from a single type of stone, least of all that it was Chunar sandstone as almost universally asserted. Some capitals located distant from Magadha, for example the one at Sanchi, appear to be carved from a different stone. Moreover, in Magadha itself, for example, in the Kaimur Hills, buff-colored sandstone is available, so there would have been no need to rely on the Chunar quarries unless the center of production were closer to them, perhaps at Sarnath.

were provided for Buddhist monasteries that may have patronized artists entirely unrelated to those used by Aśoka.

If artists customarily worked in relatively confined areas, then it may be accurate to imagine a consistent stylistic evolution through the period. At the very least, I think it likely that there were three distinctive regional styles that prevailed. One broadly modeled style seems evident in Magadha, where, for example, the Bodhgaya railing sculptures bear something in common with the Aśokan pillars, and are virtually indistinguishable in style from a female figure still today at Rajasan in Muzaffarpur district, Bihar. A second style is more or less localized in Madhyadeśa, linking the Bhārhut sculptures with those of the Great Stūpa at Sanchi as well as with the many other reliefs at monasteries in the vicinity of Sanchi (Willis 2000). We know clearly from the inscription on the south gateway of Sanchi's Great Stūpa that artists associated themselves with a particular locality; the sculptors explicitly refer to themselves as coming from Vidiśa, only eight km from Sanchi. The third style is that of southeast India, represented by the *stūpa* railings at Jaggayyapeta and Amaravati. There the material, marble with considerable foliation, contributes to the nervous outline, but other factors help define a localized style, e.g., the illusionistic perspective and almost agitated motion of the figures.

But do the obvious regional styles indicate that there was not a pan-Indian style? Quite clearly there was, and such closely related styles made the process of long-distance pilgrimage less daunting than it otherwise would have been. One could come from Kanchipuram to Bhārhut and still be within a relatively familiar visual realm. The structure of the *stūpa*, details of the railing, and even the style of relief, if it was of relatively recent origin, would feel familiar and, moreover, help shape a sense of identity.

If that is the case, then what sort of stylistic groupings other than the regional ones might be suggested? They fall into a few categories:

1. The Maurya group includes, at least with certainty, nothing but the pillars bearing Aśoka's inscriptions. That is limited to the pillars with lion capitals, either a single lion as in the case of the Lauriya-Nandangarh and Rampurva pillars, or addorsed lions as in the case of the Sarnath and Sanchi pillars. The Rampurva bull and Sankissa elephant, though probably of Aśokan date, did not surmount inscribed pillars and so cannot with certainty be assigned to this time. Nor can the pillar at Vaiśali, which is uninscribed.

2. The planar group, as it might be described, that is, those relief sculptures bearing similarity to the ones at Bhārhut, includes: Sanchi Stūpa 2, Bhaja vihara 19, Jaggapappeta, and a few sculptures at Amaravati. They are probably early in date because some of the reliefs at Amaravati are on slabs that were reused for reliefs of a very much more modeled style, ones that have anthropomorphic images of the Buddha. Many other works as well may be associated with this style, for example, terracotta sculptures from Chandraketugarh and a few sculptures from Mathura, the Parkham male figure among them.

3. The Bodhgaya group. This is, in fact, a very small group, one consisting of the Bodhgaya railing and very few other sculptures. Beside the female figure from Rajasan, also in Bihar, and a pillar figure from Mathura, little else can be related to the group, suggesting the possibility that it is rather localized in extent.

4. The highly modeled group, as I might call the last group, features the reliefs of Sanchi Stūpas 1 and 3 but also includes a number of the rock-cut sanctuaries, for example, the main hall at Karle, as well as some of the sculptures from Amaravati.

Very likely there is a chronological order to these groups, that is, the order in which they are presented, 1 through 4, though this is by no means certain.

About the beginning of the Kushana period, changes are introduced that appear as abrupt as those marking the transition following Aśoka's reign. They go beyond the introduction of the anthropomorphic depiction of the Buddha, which in fact may date earlier. In addition, we see flourishing production in Gandhara, apparently a region without earlier artistic production, and at Mathura, long home to sculptors. At Mathura the production is so extensive that images made there were widely exported, a system recalling that of the previous great empire, Aśoka's. In the intervening years, works of art seem to have been produced at the site where they were to be set up. At the same time, a degree of caution needs to be introduced to the usual understanding of the export of sculptures from Mathura. That is, not all works commonly attributed to a Mathura workshop were made there; the stone is sufficiently distinctive to show that not all sculptures fashioned in the Kushana style associated with Mathura actually were made there.[13] For example, a seated Bodhisattva from Sanchi is not a Mathura product, nor is a seated Buddha from Bodhgaya, even though both are often said to originate from Mathura. Conversely, some works from other sites imagined to date prior to the Kushana period in fact, may be Kushana-period products but reflect distinctive local styles which might be considered regional variants of the Kushana Mathura style.[14]

THE ROLE OF EMPIRE

It is fashionable and generally appropriate to think beyond imperial sponsorship of Indian works of art. This thinking helps counter the sense, suggested by dynastic divisions of the history of Indian art and the customary concentration on large monuments, that all Indian art is imperially sponsored. Of all the monuments considered here, however, only the pillars erected by Aśoka were provided by a monarch. All others were the product of collective patronage of individuals or, in the case of a few free-standing sculptures, the product of a single individual.

Nevertheless, empire does make a difference. Major changes come about during the times India is most intimately engaged in an international community. Thus during the Maurya period, when India, as never before, was linked with the Mediterranean world, we see the introduction of stone sculpture, at least in the form of the Aśokan columns. This innovation, however, should not be viewed in the customary colonialist terms, that is, as a result of Hellenistic or Achaemenian export. Rather, it was Aśoka's full and willing engagement with a larger world that made

[13] Despite the common name of the stone, Sikri sandstone, it is quarried today at Bansi Pahar in Bharatpur District Rajasthan, about thirty-five kilometers west of Fatehpur Sikri, likely the site of the ancient quarries as well.

[14] For example, the famous female chauri bearer from Didarganj. See Asher and Spink 1989.

possible the import of ideas and an environment in India that generated a culture receptive to these new ideas. Moreover, it was Aśoka's sense of empire that stimulated the expansion of Buddhism from its Magadhan homeland to an area extending westward almost to the border of Iran. With the spread of the faith and the extensive placement of visual markers, as well as written ones, a sense of common culture served as a bond across a massive empire. With the precipitous breakdown of that empire almost immediately after Aśoka's time, new styles and forms emerged but ones that had much more localized currency.

Similarly for the period under review here, the spread of Kushana hegemony across northern India facilitated innovation. It is not necessary to assume any direct Kushana involvement in the patronage of art or religion to accept the dynastic role in creating an environment that allowed the importation of ideas. First, the extent of the empire reestablished links with the Mediterranean world. With Bactrian and Seleucid kingdoms on the very borders of the newly expanded Kushana Empire, there was easy contact with Mediterranean forms. There even may have been artists from the Bactrian and Seleucid kingdoms, perhaps even from places west of that, who were brought to India's northwest, that is to Gandhara. But the import of ideas, even of artists, need not be conceived in customary colonialist terms. That is, one does not have to imagine foreign artists finally teaching the poor benighted Indians, ignorant of the potential of an image as object of worship, how to create such forms. Rather, one can imagine that with the establishment of empire, patrons everywhere could draw upon far greater resources to accomplish what they sought to do. And that might include hiring sculptors from distant places since they, the patrons, had the wealth and convertible currency to allow bringing in the very best resources they desired. Local workshops then might seek to compete by providing comparable local products.

In other words, empire serves to facilitate the production of culture. It is not essential to imagine a direct imperial hand in such production. The king did not need to have a clue about what was happening at the level of a religious institution such as a monastery. What happened, however, could transpire because of the king.

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4

Numismatics and History: The Maurya-Gupta Interlude in the Gangetic Plain

Shailendra Bhandare

PROLOGUE

The objective of this chapter is to discuss certain historical assumptions that we have been holding on to for a long while. It concerns ancient Indian chronology in general, but with particular reference to the post-Mauryan period and to a geopolitical area—the Gangetic plain. It aims to achieve the following:

- launch an inquiry into the fundaments of the accepted model for chronology
- analyze the evidence that has been used and offer a critique of the data and the methodologies employed
- suggest a reassessment by abridging the evidence and suggesting methodological shifts
- conclude with a summary of the assessment

SETTING THE STAGE

From a historiographic viewpoint, researchers on the Early Historic period of Indian history (circa 400 BCE–300 CE) have drawn largely upon two kinds of evidence—the literary (or textual) and the material. Most writings on epigraphy, numismatics, archaeology, and, to a certain extent art history can be classified as representative of contributions based on the latter. Writings on broad historical themes like urbanization and settlement, evolution of market economy, and state formation have effectively drawn on such evidence (Thapar 2004, Lahiri 1999). But its utility as a significant element in one of the most important aspects of historical reconstruction, namely chronology, remains almost unrecognized and at best underrepresented.

Literary evidence remains the dominant or primary evidence when it comes to this crucial element, and has been widely utilized to suggest a chronological skeleton for ancient Indian history (Raychaudhuri 1950, Nilakantha Sastri 1957). Literary evidence is drawn from a pool of textual sources and components of their study such as language, semantics, and philology. In a historiographic sense, the contribution of

scholars working with textual evidence began a few decades earlier than those dealing—exclusively or nonexclusively—with material evidence. Its origin lies in the age of Romanticism, which dominated the European cultural milieu in the late eighteenth century. With the introduction and advent of the knowledge of Sanskrit, the classical Indian language, an enormous body of "ancient" Indian literature was rendered accessible for scholarly studies in Europe. Momentous contributions such as Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* and Pargiter's *Dynastic Texts of the Kali Age* were made through consolidation and scholarly editing of Sanskrit sources. Buddhist studies began with the study of canonical languages such as Pāli. It is hardly a wonder, therefore, that contributions emanating from such research loomed large over historical writings. The swing in favor of textual evidence was compounded when the body of scholars was greatly extended in the twentieth century through participation of "Western-educated" Indians in the field.

In comparison, material evidence for mainstream historical reconstruction remained ignored. Antiquarian explorations began on an amateur scale in the early nineteenth century and were confined to the activities of a few maverick personalities like Charles Masson and army officials like James Tod and Alexander Cunningham. The latter went on to found the Archaeological Survey of India, which was institutionalized by viceroy Lord Curzon. Similar departments were set up by a few enlightened native regimes such as those of the princely states of Baroda and Hyderabad. Surveys were conducted and finds reported through such agencies (Yazdani 1960). But as interpretative studies mainly remained a preserve of a certain scholarly elite deliberating under the aegis of societies such as the Asiatic Society, and as textual studies were the established norm, much of the material evidence available was studied under their shadow.

Two major schools emerged in twentieth-century India that established different paradigms for historical reconstruction. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, nationalism came to dominate the psyche of much of the native intelligentsia. This gave a further boost to the utilization of indigenous texts for historical reconstruction, for they were regarded as "India's answer" to classical Western texts, regarded as the basis of Western historical tradition. Elements of material evidence such as coins, inscriptions, and archaeological objects were analyzed largely within the framework provided by textual studies, and ready attributions were provided by seeking comparative and descriptive corroborations from texts. The nationalistic bias of researchers is visible in many such contributions—to name a couple, Parameshwari Lal Gupta on coins and Vasudeva Sharana Agrawala on various aspects of Indology such as Indian art (Agrawala 1953, Gupta 1969). The latter was one of the first Indian scholars to have made effective use of linguistic treatises, such as the works of the Sanskrit grammarian Pāṇini, toward studying aspects beyond the basic scope of the text, viz., socioeconomic and political history. The post-independence years saw the advent of the Marxist school of history among historians. Exponents of this school placed an ever-diminishing emphasis on skeletal elements of historical reconstruction. Thus narrative history and its constituent aspects like chronology were largely neglected in favor of Marxist interpretations of historical phenomena. This, along with the emergence of other post-modern schools of history writing, has meant that the basic elements of historical restructuring have remained fossilized in the contributions

of the early twentieth century, so far as ancient Indian history is concerned. This has become more noticeable in recent writings on the early historical period, where one witnesses great strides made on themes such as state formation, urbanization, polity, socioeconomic life, etc., but hardly any new writing has appeared about chronology.

Ancient Indian chronology traditionally rests on a set of dates upon which subsequent developments can be pinned. The most significant of these are the dates of the historical Buddha, the synchronism between Chandragupta Maurya and Alexander's immediate successors in the East, and the mention of four foreign rulers in the edicts of Aśoka that have helped to date his reign. The date of the nirvana of the Buddha is widely regarded as 486 BCE; however, this has been recently questioned (see below). The Chandragupta-Alexander synchronism is more reliable, ostensibly because of the Western classical connection, and convincingly places Chandragupta at circa 320 BCE. By far the most important is one equating Aśoka's contemporaneity with four rulers in the Hellenic world.

The other significant benchmarks involving ancient Indian chronology are the Indian eras—the Vikrama Saṃvat and the Śaka era. While we know the exact commencement of these eras by their concordance with the Christian calendar, 56 BCE and 78 CE, respectively, the circumstances that prompted their promulgation have been debated (Basham 1968). The Śaka era is now widely regarded to date from the accession (to the title of Mahākṣatrapa, according to some) of Chaṣṭana, the Kārddamaka Kṣatrapa ruler of Gujarat, which ties up with the reckoning of the Śaka era. As regards the Vikrama era, a significant chronological hypothesis was developed mainly by Bivar, MacDowall, and Fussman, who equated it with an era called the Azes era (Marshall 1912–1913, 1914) known from inscriptions of the Indo-Scythian kings who ruled in Gandhāra. This has formed the basis of Gandhāran chronology, but its applicability, insofar as the early historic period in Gangetic north India is concerned, has not been investigated sufficiently.

As noted earlier, the fundamental basis for developing all these chronological benchmarks has essentially been the literary evidence. In recent years a couple of these have been debated, and one significant answer has been provided. The date of Buddha's nirvana has come under fresh scrutiny, and some scholars like Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich have argued for it to be moved later almost by a century (Bechert 1991–1997). Harry Falk has provided dates of an important ruler of ancient India, namely, the Kushana emperor Kanishka, on the basis of his study of a near-contemporary Sanskrit text, the *Yavanajātaka* of Sphujiddhwaja, that specifies the reckoning between Śaka and Kushana eras (Falk 2001). The methodological basis of such inquiries is varied—in the case of the date of the Buddha, the opinions of Gombrich and Bechert have emanated from a philological approach, while Falk's contribution relies largely on reassessing earlier rescensions of the text. But the nature of reckoning given by the statement in *Yavanajātaka* renders it convincing and adds to its evidence potential. Similarly, a reckoning provided by Albiruni with regard to the Gupta and Śaka eras makes their mutual correlation and, in consequence, the correlation with the Christian calendar, explicitly clear. However, in many cases, the significant drawback in ascertaining and working out such correlations is that they are nothing more than working hypotheses, and therefore their applicability remains

essentially confined to certain geographical pockets, e.g., the Azes-Vikrama era in Gandhāra or the Kalachuri-Chedi era in central India.

LITERARY EVIDENCE DESCRIBED

In the context of the chronological and geographic limits to which this chapter is confined, the main body of literary evidence utilized for historical reconstruction by the exponents of the textual school is a group of semimythical texts called the Purāṇas. From a religious standpoint, they belong to a genre labeled Hindu or Brahmanic literature. There are eighteen Purāṇas traditionally known, however Matysa, Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa, and Bhaviṣya Purāṇas are pertinent for a dynastic account of north India during the post-Mauryan period. What they contain is an essentially linear presentation of the historical course in the post-Mauryan period. They are largely unanimous about the succession to the imperial Mauryas—they state that they were succeeded first by the Śuṅgas, then by the Kaṇvas, and last by the Āndhras. As for the focus of post-Mauryan polity, the Purāṇas name the city of Vidisha as the capital of the Śuṅgas. Along with a few other aspects, such as the details of dynastic succession, this remains the broad historical framework gleaned from the Purāṇas. For the finer elements of historical detail, scholars of the textual school have turned to other texts, the chief of which are *Harṣacharitam* of Bana, the play *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kālidāsa, and the *Grammatik* of Patañjali named *Mahābhāṣya*. These confine the Śuṅga realm to the "central part of Mauryan Empire," i.e., the provinces of Kosala, Vidisha, and Magadha. Certain Buddhist texts refer to the first Śuṅga ruler Puṣyamitra as a persecutor of Buddhism and claim he held sway as far as Sagala and Jalandhara in the Punjab (Jayaswal 1917). All texts are unanimous about certain facts—Puṣyamitra was the commander of the Mauryan army, was a brahmin, and staged a coup d'etat to seize power after killing the last Mauryan ruler, named Bṛhadratha.

The date of ascension of Puṣyamitra is fixed at 187 BCE on the basis of various years which the Purāṇas ascribe to Aśoka and his successors. Puṣyamitra is said to have been succeeded by nine other kings, and the Śuṅga reigns as mentioned in the Purāṇas are :

Puṣyamitra 36 years
Agnimitra 8 years
Vasujyeṣṭha (Sujyeṣṭha) 7 years—disagreement whether he was also called
Vasumitra (Sumitra) 10 years
Odraka (many variants such as Andhraka, etc.) 2 or 7 years
Pulindaka 3 years
Ghoṣa 3 years
Vajramitra 9 or 7 years
Bhāga (Bhagavata) 32 years
Devabhūti 10 years

Scant information about other kings in this list trickles through other sources mentioned above. Thus Agnimitra, the son of Puṣyamitra, is the hero of Kālidāsa's play, where the plot describes him coveting Malavika, a princess of the neighboring kingdom of Vidarbha, a pursuit that brings him into conflict with Yajñasena, the king of Vidarbha (Nilakantha Sastri 1957: 96; Devdhar 1972). In the same play, Agnimitra's son Vasumitra engages the Yavanas on the banks of river "Sindhu." The mention of Yavanas having made inroads deep into India are taken from Patañjali, who uses sentences such as "The Yavanas have besieged Sāketa" and "the Yavanas have besieged Mādhyamikā" to illustrate certain grammatical rules (Keilhorn 1880–1885: vol. 2, 119). In Bana's *Harṣacaritam*, Vasumitra is depicted as an obsessive patron of dramatic arts and is killed by one Mitradeva while in the midst of actors.

The Purāṇas denounce the last ruler of the Śuṅga lineage, namely Devabhūti, as a dissolute ruler. Bana calls him "over-libidinous" and says he was killed by the intrigues of his minister Vāsudeva Kaṇva, who had him murdered at the hands of a slave concubine (Raychaudhuri 1950: 395). Thus began the Kaṇva lineage—here for the first time we find that the linear narrative of the Purāṇas breaks through various rescensions of the texts. While some editions allude to a dynastic change, others suggest vestiges of Śuṅga rule by mentioning that the Kaṇvas had become rulers "amongst the Śuṅgas." While describing the next political succession, i.e., the Kaṇvas being succeeded by the Āndhras, it is mentioned that the Āndhra ruler "not only removed Kaṇvas from their fortunes but also wiped off what was left of the Śuṅga power" (Bhandarkar 1895, section 6). However, the narrative maintains its linearity to a large extent. Adding up the various years mentioned for the Śuṅga rulers, we arrive at 75 BCE as the date of the Vāsudeva's disposal of Devabhūti, and the Kaṇva order of succession as given in the Purāṇas is:

Vāsudeva 9 years
Bhūmimitra 14 years
Nārāyana 12 years
Suṣarmā 10 years

According to the Purāṇas, the Āndhra ruler Simuka or Ṣiṣuka ousted the last Kaṇva ruler Suṣarmā. The Purāṇas then go on to describe a dynastic list of the Āndhras. It is worthwhile to note that in the puranic narrative, "Magadha" remains a geopolitical "ghost area." The Purāṇas describe the Śuṅgas as ruling at Vidisha, which is located far away from the classical area of Magadha—but while describing their succession to the Mauryas, it is said that they appropriated the Magadhan throne. Similarly the Āndhras, after supplanting the Kaṇvas, are described to have gained ascendancy in Magadha, even though we know that the Āndhra supremacy never reached the Magadha region. Thus, the boundaries of "Magadha" are much broader than its original geographic extent in the view of the Purāṇas.

ASSESSMENT OF LITERARY EVIDENCE

From a critical viewpoint, the picture presented on the basis of textual evidence for the post-Mauryan aftermath suffers from a few salient drawbacks. First, none of the texts utilized toward such an end is a historical text—at best some of them like the Purāṇas

are semi-mythified dynastic accounts; at worst, others are creative expressions like plays and prose. Second, most of the texts far outdate the period they are describing. The compilation of the Purāṇas is thought to have been accomplished not much before the Gupta ascendancy (Raychaudhuri 1950: 6). Kālidāsa as a contemporary of Chandragupta Vikramaditya is dated to the fourth century CE. Bāṇa as a biographer of Harṣa dates to the seventh century, and many Buddhist texts that describe Puṣyamitra as a Brahmanist resurgent against the followers of Buddhism date even later, almost to the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries. Third, an important methodological flaw in the utility of texts, especially the Purāṇas, is that only the "consolidated" manuscript often gets used for its historical details. Various versions and manuscripts of a text are considered before its eventual consolidation and the variations of details that may have existed among these are often left out for the advantage of the consolidated manuscripts. Such variations in details are not only "intertextual"; they are also "intratextual" and severely diminish the merit of the concerned texts as a source of historical information. For example, the name of the Satavahana ruler Pulumavi is found in several variations such as "Pulomarchis," "Sulumavi," "Masulodi," etc. (Bhandare 1999: 18–20). The variance in detail is not confined to puranic texts; it is seen among other literary sources as well. For example, Bana and some other sources mention Puṣyamitra as a Śuṅga ruler, while Kālidāsa names him as a scion of the Baimbika family. Fourth, many of these texts—before their consolidation at the hands of European scholars in the nineteenth century—were transmitted by the oral tradition. The risk of interpolation and overlapping, especially when it comes to finer details, are far too grave to ignore when they are used for historical reconstruction. Finally, the texts are not sufficiently studied for their own historicity, i.e., they have not been effectively scrutinized to show how their contents have evolved chronologically. This is mainly because their consolidation was based more on linguistic and semantic grounds than on a historical basis or from a historical perspective. Internal restructuring of the evidence would seem a crucial step before committing it to any historical fact, but in case of these texts, it has seldom been accomplished.

In spite of such significant drawbacks, textual evidence seems to loom large over historical reconstruction for the aftermath of the Mauryas. Conspicuous theories have been put forward about how the Magadhan imperial apparatus largely survived under the Śuṅgas, especially in the initial period, and how it faltered as we move toward the Kaṇvas and the Āndhras (Nilakantha Sastri 1957: 100–103). Stray mentions have been used as a basis of concordance within the body of the textual evidence, a good example being Kālidāsa and Patañjali. We have seen that in his play *Mālavikāgnimitram* by Kālidāsa, Prince Vasumitra engages a body of "Yavana" cavalry along the banks of a certain river called Sindhu. This mention is believed to be corroborated by Patañjali's description of the cities of Sāketa (Ayodhya) and Mādhyamikā (Nagari in Chitor district, Rajasthan) being besieged by the "Yavanas"—the assumption being that these cities are close to rivers named Sindhu and the description of a "Yavana" cavalry along their banks is justified whichever instance one may consider. If one takes a look at a map, there exists a river named Kali Sindh that runs almost parallel to the Chambal in Malwa—but it is at least 150 km away from Nagari. There is no trace of any river named Sindhu in the vicinity of Ayodhya, unless it is an insignificant stream. It is therefore clear that the contextual alignment of the Yavanas with the cities of Sāketa or Mādhyamikā and the presence of a river named Sindhu is thrown very much in the air! But, notwithstanding the failing accuracy of this so-called corroboration, it has been repeated as an example of how the textual evidence supports itself internally.

This sort of factual anomaly is not indeed limited to the so-called congruencies or corroborations between various texts. The entire logic of dating the texts and their contents seems to be circular. Another stray reference in Patañjali is taken to date conclusively the commentary to the "Śuṅga" period—this is about a sacrifice being performed for Puṣyamitra, and the basis of the argument seems to be the tense which is used for the particular grammatical allusion. The tense indicates that the sacrifice was still being performed (Nilakantha Sastri 1957: 97) while the text was being compiled and therefore the entire text was labeled as a product of Puṣyamitra's period. The mentions of "Yavanas" invading the cities are then taken as historical truth—on the basis of the earlier inference regarding the date of the text, the "Yavana" invasion of Indian hinterland is dated to the "Śuṅga" period. Four textual references—three from Patañjali taken out of context, and one from Kālidāsa—are all that is required for presenting this historical development.

THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE—ITS EARLY FATE

Obviously, the historical framework suggested mainly on the basis of textual evidence is not satisfactory. One would therefore turn to material evidence—but with reference to the methodological approach adopted by many Indologists, it is evident that material evidence has been treated as a component that is either made to fit within the framework provided by the textual evidence, or discarded if it doesn't! The reason for a lack of concordance and rational assessment of these two vital components of evidence can be understood through parallel developments in the historiography of attempts to restructure history on their basis. First, as said earlier, elements of material evidence were relatively new entrants to the field. Second, they required specialist help to render them accessible—inscriptions required epigraphists, coins required numismatists, and excavations required archaeologists. Exponents of each of these specialist branches utilized certain methodologies which made use of the framework already established to contextualize their findings, rather than question its foundations. There are a number of reasons why this happened, but the most significant seems to be the *esprit d'epoch* dominating the lapse of time in which these specialists were working—that of nationalism. To many scholars in the field, the texts were collective wisdom of an Indian past, a past that needed to be glorified in face of colonial oppression. Thus there was a point to be proven and there was an imminent need of attribution to prove it favorably. It is this need of attribution that seems to have preempted the secondary treatment given to material evidence.

A word may also be said about the methodologies employed by these specialists. Their treatment of the objects they were dealing with was essentially antiquarian—it remained confined to the decipherment and classification of the material on their hands. They evolved certain models to draw conclusions, but these were linear and compartmental in nature, not allowing a wider contextual analysis. A good example, to which we shall return in detail, will be that of the numismatic

chronology of the Gangetic plains. Here the demise of a "universal" Mauryan monetary apparatus, namely, the silver punch-marked coinage, was adjudged to have been followed by other kinds of coins—those that were made by dissimilar techniques like casting and double-die striking. In general, punch-marked coins were thought to precede these coinages, mainly on the assumption that die striking was introduced by the Greeks. The cast coins, almost exclusively made of copper, were thought to succeed punch-marked coins in closer succession, and were often regarded as lower metal equivalents of the silver punch-marked coins. This assumption rested on the basis of information provided by the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, wherein the Mauryan currency is described as being bimetallic and quadri-denominative (Kangle 1969). A similar treatment was applied to a range of north Indian coinages which were broadly classified as city, tribal, and monarchical issues; within a given spatial context, the "city" coinages were always thought to precede the "monarchical" and other coinages. Then there was a whole set of arguments based on typology—arguments that were thought to provide answers for sequencing and internal chronology of the coins in a given numismatic series. Sometimes, the arguments and the conclusions based on them were qualitative and simplistic. For example, within the broad range of Indo-Scythian coins, those mentioning a king named Azes shown mounted on a horseback were noted to come in two types—one that showed him holding a spear, and the other that showed him holding a whip. This was translated in a historical sense to denote two different kings named Azes, namely Azes I and Azes II (Jenkins and Narain 1957). The referral to the established historical framework did not always allow such inferences to work out. In that case the response was to stop at the description of the coins, allude to textual mentions, and leave them as sundry objects relegated to the end pages of a chapter (e.g., Deo and Gupta 1974). An approach more detrimental than the one just described was to make them fit into the established framework. One way was to suggest that members of "imperial" households like the Śuṅgas or their vassals issued them. A good example of this is the equation of a ruler named Agnimitra in a series of Pāñchāla coins (described further) to the Śuṅga king of this name mentioned by Kālidāsa and the Purāṇas (Nilakantha Sastri 1957: 100)—a conclusion that takes both the textual and the material evidence completely out of the spatial context within which the object (coin) is to be located.

The main reason for a wider lack of concordance between the textual and material components is the isolationist way scholars working on both have followed in a historiographic sense. When only a feeble strand of corroboration becomes visible scholars jump at it, taking it as a mutually acceptable peg of detail upon which the evidence can be hammered to secure it in position to support a wider or "universal" tent of history. Otherwise, the contextual (methodological and historiographic) framework for the working of textual and object-based or material evidence remains different in its nature. To minimize such a discord, the methodologies to be adopted need to be interdisciplinary, and any disposition toward quick attributions should be consciously avoided. In the longer run, material evidence needs to be freed from the overriding dominance of the textual tradition and analyzed with methods suitably constructed to accommodate the salient features of the aspects under scrutiny.

MATERIAL EVIDENCE—INSCRIPTIONS

The main components of material evidence that one can take into consideration for such a rational assessment are inscriptions and coins. Each of these can be shown to have a set of certain general attributes, which will be elucidated further. A very wide range of historically significant inscriptions is known for the immediate post-Maurya interlude in Gangetic plain. But those mentioning a ruling entity, or at least a regnal reckoning, are indeed scanty. Some of them have been widely known and a few others have been recent finds. These inscriptions are:

Bodhgaya inscription of Indrāgnimitra
Pabhosa (near Kausambi) inscriptions mentioning Vaihidariputra Āṣāḍhasena and other kings (Sircar 1965: 95–97)
Bharhut inscription of Vachhiputa Dhanabhūti (Sircar 1965: 87–88)
Erich brick inscription of Dāmamitra of the Baimbika family (Shrivastava 1991)
Musanagar brick inscription of the same king (Shrivastava 1996)
Erich brick inscription of Āṣāḍhamitra (Shrivastava 1993)
Ayodhya inscription of a king named Dhana(deva) (Sircar 1965: 94–95)

Then there are other inscriptions, which are located out of the Gangetic plains but have significance for political developments in the region. They are:

Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela, king of Orissa (Sircar 1965: 213–220)
Besnagar Garuda pillar inscription of Bhāgabhadra (Sricar 1965: 88–89)

We will have a look into each of these inscriptions for the details they contain and how they have been rendered useful for historical reconstruction. A brief criticism will also be presented where pertinent. At the outset one needs to note there is general agreement that all of these conform to the post-Maurya, pre-Kushana interlude in the Gangetic plains, roughly falling within the period 200 BCE–100 CE.

Bodhgaya Inscription of Indrāgnimitra

This was found on a banister at Bodhgaya and records the donation of a "royal palace and a *chaitya*" by Kurangī, the queen (Prajāvatī) of one Indrāgnimitra. When the inscription itself is consulted afresh from its estampages, it becomes clear that the very indication that Indrāgnimitra was a king, or indeed Kurangī a queen, is doubtful. No royal title is appended to either of their names. The word "Prajāvatī" is Kurangī's appellation, but it may not necessarily mean a "queen." Taking its meaning to be "queen" is what seems to have prompted the recognition of Indrāgnimitra as a king. This is therefore an a priori kind of deduction, and thus the identity of Indrāgnimitra as a king finds no evidence. Notwithstanding this fact, a general consensus prevails on identifying this Indrāgnimitra as a ruler who struck coins in the "Pāñchāla" series (see below, Munshi and Majumdar et al. 1951: 100). But no coins bearing the name Indrāgnimitra are known in the Pāñchāla series—there are coins of Agnimitra and Indramitra, but they are indeed struck by separate issuers (Allan 1936: cxx). Thus, this

is yet another instance where "factual" reporting seems to have taken a turn for the anomalous and the inference taken out of the context of coinage as well as the inscription.

Pabhosa Inscriptions

There are two inscriptions at Pabhosa near Kausambi, which celebrate the donation of rock-cut caves located there. The first inscription is fragmented toward its end. Both of them mention a king named Vaihadariputra Āṣāḍhasena. In the first inscription, he identifies himself as maternal uncle of a king named Gopāliputra Bahasatimita and uses a regnal year reckoning that has been widely believed to represent the reign of the Śuṅga ruler Udāka (Odraka) (Rapson 1922). The consensus is therefore to regard Āṣāḍhasena and his nephew Bahasatimita as Śuṅga feudatories. However, there is no regal title accompanying Odraka's name, which is strange because his so-called feudatory Bahasatimita is explicitly named a king. It is matter of debate, therefore, whether the years are to be reckoned at all as those of a Śuṅga ruler, or whether they are Āṣāḍhasena's own, or whether they are to be reckoned as of Bahasatimita. This brings us back to question whether the name Udāka really offers a concordance with the puranic mention of Odraka, or is something else, like a place name (Barau 1930: 23). Bahasatimita indeed seems to be a local king at Kausambi, as is evidenced by his coins (discussed further) and therefore it seems plausible that the regnal year mentioned in the first inscription is his, rather than that of a Śuṅga "overlord." In identifying Udāka with Odraka, the overriding sentiment seems to quickly attribute anything that corresponds to a textual mention and to base a historical premise on this correlation—a classic case of the methodological approach that has been already discussed.

In the second inscription, Vaihidariputra Āṣāḍhasena gives his genealogy as descent from King Śaunakāyanīputra Vangapāla, who was his grandfather, and Tevaṇiputra Bhāgavata, his father. There is no mention of Bahasatimita or of any regnal reckoning. Vangapāla is identified with a king of Pāñchāla known from certain coins (Bajpai 1976: 74–89, Shrimali 1978). Judging by this attribution of Vangapāla, the fragmentary portion of the first inscription has been restored to include a mention of Ahichhatra, the capital of Pāñchāla.

Bharhut Inscription of Vachhiputa Dhanabhūti

It mentions the donation of a *toraṇa* and its stonework for the *stūpa* of Bharhut by King Vachhiputa Dhanabhūti. He is mentioned as being the son of King Gotiputa Agarāju and the grandson of King Gāgiputa Visadeva. No regnal reckoning is provided, but the inscription begins with two words which have been taken as incontrovertible evidence that these rulers were feudatories of the Śuṅgas. These words are *Suganam Rajé* and have been rendered as "during the rule of the Śuṅgas." Once this was considered an epigraphic evidence for Śuṅga rule, several other historical conclusions were drawn on its basis. The major conclusion among these is based on the absence of any regal title preceding the word "Śuṅga," or indeed the mention of any specific Śuṅga ruler. These particulars have been regarded to have a chronological bearing, and it is inferred on their basis that the engraving of the inscription must have been accomplished during a period when the Śuṅga power suffered a decline (Sircar 1965: 88). The entire chronology of the Bharhut *stūpa* and what has been widely termed as Śuṅga art is based on this assumption. Needless to say, the Bharhut inscription and its rendering have provided another benchmark for chronology and cultural developments of the period, but it is evident that the fundament for drawing such immensely significant conclusions has been shaky, relying only on interpretation of the two words. Indeed, if the "Śuṅgas" were not known from literary sources, the interpretation of *Suganam Rajé* as "during the Śuṅga rule" would not have been accomplished. It is interesting to note that Alexander Cunningham, who discovered the inscription, rendered the meaning of the words *Suganam* as "of the Śrughnas" and not as "of the Śuṅgas."

To infer that the rulers mentioned in the Bharhut inscription were Śuṅga feudatories and to comment that the "imperial" power was in decline allude to the isolationist approach of fitting material evidence into the literary framework. At least one king mentioned in the inscription, namely Agarāju, is known from his coins, which conform to a localized series in the Baghelkhand area (the southern part of region classically known as Vatsa), located immediately to the north of the monument. If the entire lineage was a Śuṅga feudatory at all, how on earth Agarāju struck coins while his masters did not would be a question worth pursuing.

Inscriptions of Dāmamitra of the Baimbika Family

These are of a relatively recent provenance—the first is found at the ancient site of Erich in Jhansi district and the second at Musanagar (exact location not provided, but in the same vicinity). The first is dedicatory in nature and mentions the creation of a tank at Erich. The second commemorates the king's horse sacrifice. Topographically, the domains of this ruler seem to be confined to certain urban centers like Erich located on the river Betwa in the southwestern Gangetic plain. In the second inscription, the metronymic of Dāmamitra is given as Aśwavatāyanīputra and both inscriptions refer to his family as Baimbika. It is worth remembering that this is the same name with which Kālidāsa identifies the ruling house of Agnimitra, the hero of his play *Mālavikāgnimitram.*

Erich Inscription of Āṣāḍhamitra

This interesting inscription has also been found at Erich and refers to a different group of rulers than the Baimbikas. It also commemorates the excavation of a tank, in this instance by Āṣāḍhamitra, who styles himself as a *Senāpati* (Commander) and the King of Daśārṇa. His genealogy appears in the inscription wherein he is named as the son of Senāpati Mūlamitra, styled also as Lord of Daśārṇa, who is the son of Senāpati Aditamitra whose father is Senāpati Śatānika. Recently a coin of Āṣāḍhamitra has been discovered and on it he calls himself Amātya, i.e., minister (Bhandare 2003).

Ayodhya Inscription of Dhana(deva)

This inscription commemorates the setting up of a flagstaff dedicated to the god Phalgudeva. It was erected by Kausikiputra Dhanaē (where the inscription is damaged), who styles himself as the king of Kosala. His name is restored to "Dhanadeva" on basis of some local coins of Kosala (see below). It also contains the only unequivocal

inscriptional reference to a "Puṣyamitra" who is referred to as the "commander" and a "performer of two horse-sacrifices." He is taken to be the Śuṅga ruler Puṣyamitra on the basis of literary evidence, in this case the *Harṣacharitam* of Bana. It is mentioned therein that Puṣyamitra was a commander of the Mauryan army who, having got tired of the Mauryan tyranny, "gathered troops with a pretence that his sovereign should view what a fine army he possesses" and killed the last Maurya ruler to take over the Magadhan throne. The inscription styles the relationship of Dhanadeva with Puṣyamitra in a peculiar manner—Dhanadeva is named as "the sixth of Puṣyamitra." What this term means is not clear; it may mean "sixth brother" of Puṣyamitra, but that would go against the established chronological framework, because the palaeography of the inscription clearly suggests that it postdates other so-called Śuṅga records. So consensus prevails to name Dhanadeva as the sixth in descent from Puṣyamitra—his absence in the puranic genealogy has been overlooked by the familiar logic—or he may be of a minor descent and a feudatory of the Śuṅgas.

The inscriptions outside the Gangetic plain are important for certain details they contain, which correlate either with the inscriptional evidence available from the Gangetic plain or with some aspects of textual evidence. Inter-inscriptional correlation effectively links the details from respective inscriptions into an "isochronism"—it indicates a contemporaneity of such details within the inscriptional context. Inscriptional isochronisms therefore provide a vital tool for historical reconstruction through the internal evidence. Without going into other details of inscriptions located outside the Gangetic plain, it would suffice to point the isochronistic links they provide with other inscriptional details from the Gangetic plains. Inscriptions may also contain aspects that correlate with numismatic details, but in case of the Gangetic valley such corroborations are few and far between.

The Hathigumpha Inscription of Khāravela

It extols the valor of Khāravela, the king belonging to the "Mahāmeghavāhana" family of Kalinga (Orissa). It is mentioned that in the twelfth year of his reign Khāravela carried out an expedition to subdue the kings of Uttarāpatha, in course of which he "scared the people of Magadha by making his elephants drink the water of the Ganges" and made "King Bahasatimita touch his feet." Prior to this, in his eighth year he is mentioned to have "troubled Rājagṛha and sacked Goradhagiri," and while this expedition was on, "the Yavana king of Mathura fled hearing the rumble of his army and chariots." In the second year of his reign, Khāravela "marched to the west without even thinking of Sātakarṇi."

The dating of Khāravela has been one of the most contentious issues of ancient Indian chronology and is attempted on several other details that the inscription offers. The identity of the Yavana king is a crucial link to date Khāravela, but unfortunately the inscription is badly damaged at this juncture. Consensus prevails, following the most critical assessment of the inscription by K. P. Jayaswal (Jayaswal 1917), to render the damaged name as "Dimita," and a prolonged debate has followed whether "Dimita" could be Demetrios, the Indo-Greek ruler of Bactria, mentioned in Western classical sources as the "conqueror of India" (Tarn 1938: 92–93). This identification has significance not only for chronological placement of Khāravela but also of

Bahasatimita and Sātakarṇi.

The Besnagar Garuda Pillar Inscription of Bhāgabhadra

It mentions the erection of the pillar by Heliodoros, the "Yavana" emissary of King Antialcidas and a resident of Takṣaśila (Taxila). The task was accomplished in the fourteenth regnal year of King Kāsiputa Bhāgabhadra, who is styled the "savior." Antialcidas has been dated to 115–95 BCE, and as such the inscription provides a terminus post quem for Bhāgabhadra, which in turn is quite significant for approximating the chronology of other rulers in the Sanchi-Vidisha region. Although the inscription is located far to the south of the Gangetic plain, it is significant for assessing the puranic evidence which has close bearings on the history of that region, mainly because the Purāṇas mention the Śuṅgas as ruling from Vidisha, even though their rule apparently extended over the entire Gangetic valley.

ASSESSMENT OF INSCRIPTIONS

The most salient advantage of inscriptional evidence is its material nature and contemporaneity with persons and events being recorded, at least to a great extent. They can also be viewed as an important pan-north Indian historical phenomenon, where certain general assumptions about their form, content, and construction can be formed. But like textual evidence, inscriptions are not without their drawbacks. The most important of these are their physical condition and the rendition that directly depends on it. This is especially true when they are far less numerous than either the bulk of textual evidence and coins. A good example is the date of Khāravela. It is debated only because the inscription is damaged at a crucial juncture, where it mentions the name of a "Yavana" king of Mathura. The palaeography of inscriptions is a good indicator of their evidence value; however, a palaeographic assessment can only provide a chronological bracket for the inscriptional details at best. But the most significant drawback of inscriptional evidence, so far as historical reconstruction goes, is that it offers far too little internal evidence to establish any methodologies. Palaeography and isochronisms are the only tools on offer here—the first can be contentious and the latter too brief. As far as the utility of inscriptions for historical reconstruction goes, they share a common fate with other components of material evidence, that of reeling under the shadow of the texts. Again, Khāravela's inscription may be used to illustrate the point. The restoration of the Yavana king's name to "Dimita" and its proposed, albeit contested, synonymy with Demetrios has been proposed because it fits in neatly with textual evidence—the mention of Demetrios as the "conqueror of India" in a classical Graeco-Roman source, the history of Justin. Had there been no knowledge of Justin, one would never restore it to "Dimita" as proposed by Jayaswal, because a reexamination of the plates provided by him in his publication proves that the portion is indeed damaged beyond restoration!

MATERIAL EVIDENCE—NUMISMATIC METHODOLOGIES

It is against the backdrop of these two main components of evidence that we turn to coins. At the outset it must be admitted that they have been the least utilized component even though numerically they probably are the strongest. At least several hundred of them are known, from institutional as well as private collections. A good number of those housed in institutional collections have been catalogued and rendered accessible for scholarly attention. Journals like that of the Numismatic Society of India have been reporting on them for at least the last sixty years. Treatises about the historical utility of coins have been written and, for certain periods of Indian history, coins have been extensively and effectively utilized as tools for historical reconstruction.

A few words may be pertinent here on the evidence they offer and the methodologies one can adopt to facilitate their use as such. These may be largely classified into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic methodologies pertain to elements present in the coins themselves and need to be rendered accessible through specialist help. Extrinsic methodologies mainly concern hoard analysis and the provenance, or where the coins have been found; they can be helpful to understand such historical developments as circulation and distribution of the coins and consequently development of the economic structure, etc. A suitable selection of numismatic factors can be made while utilizing coins as tools for historical reconstruction. It would be worthwhile delineating them—the first three can be termed "intrinsic" and the latter two "extrinsic."

Type Characteristics

The primary elements constituting a coin "type" are legend and motif, while the secondary elements can be metallic contents, shape, weight, and other physical characteristics. Legends signify the issuing authority and have direct historical bearing, similar to inscriptions. Their language, script, grammar, and palaeography each can constitute historical evidence. The last mentioned subject, i.e., palaeography of coin legend, however, has to be utilized with great caution. As a coin offers a very limited space for the legend to be inscribed, many times the palaeographic details are threatened with distortion. This is especially true when a long legend has to be accommodated in relatively small space. The placement of the legend can also affect the palaeographic details. Placing the legend in exergue can cause more distortion than placement in a straight line. Because of these restrictions it is often hazardous to lay foundations of evidence, more specifically the dating of a coin, with emphasis on coin legends. As regards motifs, they can be animate and/or inanimate. The historical value of motifs lies with their origin and transmission. The origin might provide evidence about religious affinities of the issuer, and in case the motif has been copied from another coin series, may indicate the point and nature of contact of the issuers of the two coin series. The transmission and similarity of motifs within two members of the same dynasties indicates their close coexistence in the dynastic succession. Many times the motifs are mint-specific and assume a form of mintmark. It helps to categorize coins on the basis of their geographical distribution.

Type Succession

This is especially important at an interface where one authority responsible for coining is succeeded by another. Coins need to be acceptable to be established in circulation. The "acceptance factor" that contributes to this may depend on several variables in time and space, such as religious affinities of the issuers and the populace, artistic trends that determine the coin design, and economic conditions. Almost invariably, it is not possible to effect a drastic change in the appearance or contents of a coinage because that would go contrary to the established acceptance factor and render them unacceptable and subject to discount, which would undermine the entire structure of a monetized economy. The fallout is a phenomenon wherein a change in the issuing authority (which may be the political authority) is not readily reflected in the coinage. Thus, coins of two successive issuing authorities retain a similarity in one or more type features and indeed "look" similar. This is "type succession," and it has been one of the main elements of forming numismatic sequences, which in turn can be effectively used as historical evidence.

Counterstrikes

A single coin-blank is usually struck once between a pair of dies to mint a coin. But it can be struck more than once as well—when the die/s for the same coin are struck two or more times, the coin is said to be "restruck." When one coin is used as a blank for striking another coin, it is said to have been "counterstruck." The type of the receiving coin, upon which another set of dies are struck, is referred to as the "undertype," while the type being struck over it is called as an "overtype."

Counterstriking of coins could be motivated by political or economic reasons. When one king succeeds his adversary, he could counterstrike the latter's coins. The coins passing from one kingdom to another are liable to be counterstruck in order to be assimilated in the currency system existing there. This occurs particularly in circumstances where the currency standards are complimentary to each other, and counterstriking eliminates the steps of melting, refining, and refabricating the coins coming in via trade. In this process the issuing authority is simply exchanged by replacing the stamp of one authority by the other. It also sometimes indicates a scarcity of coins in the recipient kingdom.

The evidence forwarded by counterstruck coins is often conclusive, as it provides a terminus post quem for the undertype unless otherwise proved. It can be asserted with certainty that the issuing authority of the undertype existed either before, or as near contemporary with that of the overtype. This can prove valuable evidence for the inter-dynastic or intra-dynastic order of succession. In case of coins where at least one type is dateable, counterstriking assumes great significance for chronological placement of the other. In cases where the authorities have struck each other's coins, it can be deduced that they were contemporary.

Provenance

This term is used to describe the geographic location of the find spot of a coin or a group/hoard of coins. It can be usually deduced that there exists a relationship between

the geographical extension of a particular kingdom and dispersion of its coins. Defining such a relationship is, however, not an easy task, for the simple fact that coins have a propensity to move across a wide geographic expanse as a monetary exchange medium. Therefore it can be hazardous to conclude that the issuing authority extended its sway to every area in which its coins have been found. This is specifically true for times when coins passed as currency solely on the basis of their precious metal content, regardless of the fact that some authority other than that ruling the territory under consideration had issued them. Thus, Roman gold and silver coins freely circulated in south India, even though the region was never under direct control of Rome. But the logic works fine when applied to currency of the base metal regime, where coins of a particular type circulated in certain area depending on the choice of the people using them. In such cases the occurrence of coins issued in particular types by the issuing authority within a particular region can be safely converted into a surmise that the region, in all probability, formed the part of the kingdom of the issuing authority.

The occurrence of coins alone cannot be the basis of important historical conclusions. The nature of the coin find has also to be analyzed carefully. A necessary minimum number of coins have to be found to categorize the find as of historical significance. The establishment of this minimum threshold is the most difficult element in the treatment of evidence on the basis of provenance. However, critical assessment of hoards, excavation reports with proper stratigraphic details, and field studies in case of coins procured from scavenging communities can prove useful criteria.

Hoard Analysis

The term "hoard" refers to a group of coins, deliberately deposited and found as an aggregate at a later date. The nature of a hoard is important in its study—hoards can be of two types, namely, "emergency hoards," which include coins deposited under duress or compelling transitory situations, and "savings hoards," containing coins accumulated over the years with a view to spending at a later date.

Analyzing the hoard demands a careful study of the coins contained with a view to establishing its type contents and their classification. Reading the legends and establishing under whose authority the coins were issued is also important. The physical condition of the coins is worth assessing and, compared among the contents of the hoard, can give an idea about the circumstances under which the hoard was deposited. Generally it can be safely surmised that the hoard must have been deposited near to the chronological placement of the freshest coins contained in it.

Hoard analysis can be an invaluable source of information because hoards encapsulate the political and socioeconomic conditions of the times. If the contents of a hoard bear dates, the importance of the hoard is magnified several times. However, a careful study of the type contents can bring forth a numismatic chronology that can help in the absence of dated coins.

APPLYING THE METHODOLOGIES

With the set of variables as described above contributing to the characteristics of

coinage at our disposal, the next step will be to elucidate how these can be utilized as a source of historical evidence.

The scientific method of deduction demands that a hypothesis be set up and tested, confronting it with various facts. The numismatic way in which this can be done is to study various aspects of the coins and use them as tests for the proposed hypothesis. Of course, one cannot aspire to create "absolute chronology" for the immediate post-Mauryan epoch, because its history is problematic and incomplete. One can therefore say that proving everything is impossible. But one can certainly aspire to expressly describe the propositions on which deductions are made, so that the basis on which historical reconstruction rests can be distinctly seen. To create such a situation requires that, in this case, a numismatic typology be built up and studied. Such a typology can be defined, as described by the logicist J. C. Gardin, as "the systematic matching of intrinsic properties with extrinsic attributes, through constant to-and-fro motions between the two sets, so as to base the largest number of attributes (local, temporal and factual) to the smallest number of observations" (Guillaume 1990). It is to be noted that this definition for term typology makes it different in its context from the same term often used by numismatists in a rather diffuse manner. When the definition is applied to coins, it can be understood that the observations mentioned in the definition are nothing but the intrinsic variables contributing to the characteristics of coins, such as shape, weight, size, type, legend, etc., and the extrinsic attribute would be the provenance. In short, the numismatic typology for the Gangetic coinage can be evolved by studying the provenance along with the intrinsic properties of the coins.

REGIOSPECIFICITY—AN IMPORTANT NUMISMATIC ELEMENT

When such a study is attempted, an important observation becomes evident—the intrinsic properties of these coins are oriented to their provenance. In other words, the coins show a marked geographic orientation, as far as their weight, metal, size, and all other characteristics that collectively constitute the type are concerned. It is therefore evident that only certain types circulated in certain areas. This particular phenomenon can be termed "regiospecificity" of the coinage. It would be proper to elucidate briefly what constitutes regiospecificity.

Regiospecificity can be defined as a numismatic phenomenon in which, for a given issuing authority, the type/types of the coins it issues are peculiar to a particular geographic area. The types are called "regiospecific" coin types, and they are determined as such when their occurrence within that area, in a given aggregate found by surface exploration or through excavations, equals or exceeds the "minimum threshold" of 10 percent of the total aggregate. It is thus clear that the main elements of regiospecificity are the type or types of coins and the geographic area.

Another important feature for the coinage, so far as the post-Mauryan epoch is concerned, is that each such regiospecific area is characterized by the presence of one or more urban centers. Indeed, coins of low metallic value constitute the basis of a monetized economy for such centers at a very basic level. Today they are often found in the archaeological remnants of such urban centers. These urban centers offer us

historical microcosms, marked by the presence of urban centers and supported by their localized currency. Within a single such microcosm, the study and analysis of the coins constituting the characteristic currency, i.e., the regiospecific coins, with systematic application of numismatic methodologies as listed above, can help to create a historical picture for that particular area. When all other areas are delineated and studied in similar fashion, the historical picture that emerged in a single microcosm can be seen in a holistic perspective.

Regiospecificity is by far the most significant feature of these coins, but has been completely overlooked insofar as their historical utility is concerned. It has been recognized in the past—coins have always been listed and described under regional headings (Allan 1936). But this very method of description has helped them to be dissociated from their context—they have been "grouped" in a typically antiquarian fashion and also interpreted as such. Regiospecificity seems to be related to the rise of urbanism in north India and the ensuing trade patterns. A graphic illustration showing the relationship of trade routes and sites yielding regiospecific coins can demonstrate the link between the two. Regiospecific coin types occur around contemporary urban centers, which were also the centers of development. They harbored trading or monastic establishments. Some of them were also places of strategic importance situated on or near an overland or estuarine trade route. The link between trade, commerce, religion, and urbanization in the post-Mauryan era is well established (Ray 1986). The emergence of localized currencies around the urban centers and the fact that they rarely circulated beyond their economic sphere of influence, as indicated by the regiospecific nexus, gives an indirect index for the process of urbanization in the Gangetic plain. It demonstrates the stages of its development, until a gradual establishment of a uniform currency system under the Kushanas gave way to its decline. The phenomenon of regiospecificity of coin types can therefore be viewed as an indication of transition in the socioeconomic life in north India.

NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE DESCRIBED

Befitting the scope of this chapter, four such regiospecific areas in the Gangetic plain are considered for their numismatic merit. Coins from each area will be briefly described and their salient features noted. However, this does not preclude the existence of other such areas; indeed, toward the end of this numismatic summary that follows, a few potential but less significant areas and their coins will be named. But from the viewpoint of assessment, the discussion will be limited to these four areas. They are:

Vatsa and Chedi—chief urban centers (c.u.c.) Kausambi and Suktimati, respectively
Kosala (c.u.c. Ayodhya)
Pāñchāla (c.u.c. Ahichhatra in the north and Kampilya in the south)
Daśārṇa (c.u.c. Erich for the northern part and Eran-Vidisha for the southern)

In the first and last case, the coinage begins with civic issues which are struck in

the name of the chief urban centers. Gradually, a nominative series emerges which names the issuing authority with or without a regal title. For Kosala and Pāñchāla no civic issues are known, but nominative coinage provides a long list of individuals with/without a regal title.

Coinage of Vatsa and Chedi

The civic issues include both inscribed and uninscribed coins, which are predominantly cast (Plate 4.1a, 4.1b, and 4.1c). They depict a range of symbols, out of which the bull, the tree-in-railing, and the so-called Ujjain symbol are common. The civic issues of Vatsa are noteworthy for their innovation in shapes—coins of a wide range of shapes are known, including a semicircle, a half octagon (asymmetric hexagon), and dumb-bell or "damaru." A few of these are inscribed, mainly with the name of the city, as *Kosambi* or *Kosambiyé* (Plate 4.1d). The names of most kings end in "mita" (Skt. Mitra) and they are: Aśvaghoṣa, Agarāju, Rādhāmita (Rādhāmitra), Agimita (Agnimitra), Jeṣamita (Jyeṣṭhamitra, also known to occur in this Sanskrit form), Pothamita (Prauṣṭhamitra), Bahasatimita (Bṛhaspatimitra), Sapamita (Sarpamitra), Pajāpatimita (Prajāpatimitra), and Devamitra(?). None of these names bears a royal appellation alongside. Bela Lahiri has discussed these coins in a volume of seminar papers (Narain 1968: 36–41).

It would be worthwhile to sort the chronology of these issues. However, they have not yet been studied for the internal evidence they have to offer in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic methodological parameters that have been described in the previous section. In general, numismatists have been guided by a linear approach in arranging these in a chronological sequence. The civic issues, which are invariably cast, are thought to have preceded the nominative ones, most of which are die-struck. But a neat overlap in technique, shape, and issuing authority is found in the half-octagonal coins which bear the name of Rādhāmitra. They are manufactured by casting but betray the appearance of a punch-marked coin, the outlines of the motifs they bear on both sides being highlighted as if to resemble punches (Plate 4.2). If Rādhāmitra's issues were to be classified as "early" on this basis alone, it would transpire that they were circulating alongside the other "early" issues, namely, the inscribed and uninscribed cast coins. Furthermore, if one examines the nominative issues for their intrinsic characteristics, it becomes immediately apparent that among the group of rulers mentioned collectively as "Kausambi" or "Vatsa," there exists one predominant series with clear typological links, while other issues do not conform to it and may have actually been struck elsewhere. The link can be demonstrated in coins of Aśwaghoṣa, Bahasatimita, Agimita, Sapamita, Pajāpatimita, Jeṭhamita, and Poṭhamita, as all these coins have a very similar symbolic program for their obverse and reverse (Plate 4.3a and 4.3b). On the obverse, they depict three symbols, of which the prominent central one is a tree-in-railing. To its right, there is a "snake" symbol seen represented as a wavy vertical line, and to the left of the tree there is usually an Ujjain symbol. The name appears below these three in a straight line. The reverse uniformly bears a bull associated with an arched hill symbol to his front. It is interesting to note that the coins of Rādhāmitra also bear a similar symbolic program—the prominent tree-in-railing motif, occurring on the obverse for other

coins, is placed on the reverse of his coins. These very symbols are seen depicted prominently on a host of inscribed and uninscribed cast coins, including the civic issues.

The inference that can be drawn from these observations is quite clear—this is a series that exhibits characters sufficient to label it as a "dynastic" series. It is specific to Kausambi, and it begins with Rādhāmitra although the order of succession for the rest of the rulers remains to be elucidated. Except Aśwaghoṣa, all rulers in the series have names ending in "mitra." Cast "civic" issues, the coins of Rādhāmitra, and die-struck issues of his successors may not be placed chronologically far apart, and there is good reason to believe that as cast "civic" issues overlap with nominative issues of Rādhāmitra, they may well overlap with other die-struck issues as well. This assessment is radically different to the traditional "watertight" view about these coins—that cast "civic" coins always preceded the nominative die-struck ones. Technology of manufacture therefore can hardly be seen as a dating parameter for coins in this period. However, the general trend in development of the coinage is from civic to nominative.

The rest of the coins ascribed to Kausambi exhibit different characters. Much in the same way as the bull is associated with regiospecific issues of Kausambi, the horse is associated with those found bearing the name of the other urban center in the realm, namely Śuktimati. These coins are relatively rare. Textual evidence says that this city was the capital of another classical kingdom, the country of Chedi. They have been grouped together with Vatsa (Kausambi) issues here because they have very similar general characteristics and as such conform to the same regiospecific sphere of circulation as Kausambi. In fact, they are so similar that they have been often misattributed to Kausambi in the past (Bopearachchi and Pieper 1998: 153, n. 34). Like most civic issues of Kausambi, they are all cast and bear the name of the city (Plate 4.4a and 4.4b). There have been no nominative issues attributed to Śuktimati, but if the "horse" connection is to be believed, at least two rulers in the so-called Kausambi series demonstrate it as prominently as it occurs on the civic issues of Śuktimati. They are the coins of Jeṭhamita (not to be confused with Jeṭhamita of the Kausambi series) and most likely of Aśwaghoṣa, whose coins show all characters similar to the nominative Kausambi issues, but his name doesn"t end in "mitra" and has "aśva" (horse) in it.

Another important series of nominative coinages comprises those struck by Agarāju, the ruler who finds mention in the Bharhut inscription of Vachhiputa Dhanabhūti. Although classified as "Kausambi," these coins show hardly any similarity in the fabric, weight, and symbolic program seen on other coins belonging to other "Kausambi" types (Plate 4.5). It would therefore be quite doubtful to regard him as a ruler at Kausambi, and the entire premise of identifying him as a Śuṅga feudatory falls.

An insight into the coinage of Kausambi also highlights the disadvantages of numismatic evidence. Coins have to be considered in their proper context and have to be precisely read. Some of the kings listed as of Kausambi have come into existence because of misreading of legends: Rajanimitra, Varuṇamitra, Rājamitra, etc. A few others like Vāyuvarma have been attributed to Kausambi even though their coins have no similarity whatsoever with the rest of the Chedi-Vatsa coinage (Dasgupta 1978).

Such cases of misattribution often happen in numismatic literature and contribute to the undervaluing of the subject at large for historical reconstruction.

Coinage of Kosala

Unlike the coinage of Vatsa and Chedi, the coinage of Kosala does not consist of a profuse civic coinage. A few round and uninscribed cast coins are known, but they are so rare that no provenance information can be firmly established to assess their regiospecific character. Apart from these, the others are all nominative issues.

The predominant technique of manufacture for Kosalan coins remains casting. They are known in considerably fewer number than the Vatsa coins and exhibit a smaller number of issuers. They are broadly of two classes—first with issuers having a "datta"-ending name and the other with those having a "deva"-ending name. None of them bears a royal conjunct. Coins of both these groups are very similar in their fabric and appearance and could not have been struck widely apart in time. They are all square copper pieces.

In the former group names of Mūladeva, Vāyudeva, Visākhadeva, and Dhanadeva are encountered (Plate 4.6). The prominent symbols on their coins with strong regiospecific undertones are a bull or an elephant, a sacrificial post (*yūpa*) in a railing, and a horizontal wavy line representing a river. The symbolic program is varied, but on the reverse a unique symbol is to found for each ruler. Thus coins of Mūladeva have a wheel, coins of Vāyudeva a *Nandyāvarta* (four "Nandipada" symbols arranged radially) and coins of Visākhadeva, a *shrivatsa*. The last befits the obverse of Visākhadeva's coins, for he changes the depiction from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic by substituting Lakṣmī bathed by elephants for either the bull or the elephant. Coins of Dhanadeva are known in two broad series, both depicting the bull on the obverse but manufactured by different techniques. On the cast specimens, the bull faces to right and the reverse bears a deity amid other symbols, which are similar to the coins of the other rulers with "deva"-ending names. The die-struck coins have the bull facing left and the reverse bears the sacrificial post and a tree-in-railing with other ancillary symbols conforming to the regiospecific symbolic genre.

The coins of issuers with "datta"-ending names are of the elephant type and almost invariably of a denomination which is half that of the "deva" issuers. The names known in this series are Naradatta(?), Jyeṣṭhadatta, and Śivadatta, the last being fairly numerous considering the number of attributable coins (Plate 4.7). On their reverse they show a prominent tree-in-railing but the general arrangement and execution of symbols conform to the regiospecific Kosala type.

Because these coins are so similar in fabric, arriving at an internal chronology can be a problem. The consensus is to regard Dhanadeva as the latest ruler in the "deva" series and identify him with the Dhanadeva of the Ayodhya inscription (see above). This view is primarily forwarded on two grounds—his coins are cast as well as die-struck, and they exhibit "later" palaeography. As we have seen for Vatsa issues, there is no reason to believe that a manufacturing technique can be an effective dating tool. As for the later palaeography of the legend, this seems to be a more valid point, especially when it matches closely with the inscription.

The coins of the "datta"-series may actually belong to another urban center in

Kosala. Śrāvastī is the best bet, but without any provenance details available for these coins, this remains a mere conjecture.

Coinage of Pāñchāla

By far the most numerous kings known from any regiospecific series are from the Pāñchāla coins. As historical tradition dictates, the region was divided in northern and southern parts—Ahichhatra was the capital of northern Pāñchāla while Kampilya was the capital of southern Pāñchāla. Today the region comprises the Bareilly and Farrukhabad districts in Uttar Pradesh.

The coinage of Pāñchāla, like that of Kosala, is largely devoid of civic issues. No coins bearing the names of urban centers are known. However, the nominative coinage of Pāñchāla presents a strong regiospecific flavor in terms of the fabric, metallic contents, and design. All Pāñchāla coins are round, made of a copper alloy and have a set obverse pattern—a deeply incised square punch containing a row of three symbols, and the legend placed in a straight line below them. The three symbols are very specific in their execution and placement to the Pāñchāla series. The reverse bears depictions of divinities, and in most cases they reflect the name of the issuer appearing on obverse—a unique trait seen in Pāñchāla coins (Plate 4.8). Thus, coins of Agnimitra would have a representation of the fire god on the reverse. The iconographic elements are clearly executed and are an important element of Indian iconography.

In the past, the approach of classifying these coins has been essentially antiquarian—they are grouped on the basis of the name-endings of their issuers. The first group is with kings with "pāla" endings (Vangapāla, Yajñapāla); the second with "gupta" endings (Dāmagupta, Rudragupta, Jayagupta), and the third, which is the largest, with "mitra" endings (Suryamitra, Phālgunimitra, Bhānumitra, Bhoomimitra, Dhruvamitra, Agnimitra, Indramitra, Viṣṇumitra). Apart from these there are two rulers named Bhadraghoṣa and Yugasena who have struck coins in the same type. The treatment accorded to these coins to make some historical sense out of them is linear, and they have been grouped into "early," "middle," and "late" periods. Palaeography of their legends provides scanty internal evidence for their dating, and coins of Dāmagupta (who is also known from a clay sealing) and Vangapāla seem to be earlier than the rest. Vangapāla is probably the same ruler known from the Pabhosa inscription. Yajñapāla is placed alongside him because of a similar name ending, but this arrangement has come in question in wake of some newly discovered coins bearing the name of Yajñapāla, linked in a close parallelism that rests on denominational structure and metallic composition with a so-called later ruler named Agnimitra.

Coinage of Daśārṇa

This needs more attention than the other series because numismatic evidence from this region, which features as a stronghold of the Śuṅga monarchs in most of the texts, offers the starkest instance of a comparative insight into the dichotomy which exists between literary and material evidence. The coinage can be divided into two broad categories, namely "northern" and "southern"; the one supported a monetized urban economy in the north and the other did so in the south of the area. In the early period, both these spheres show a common trend of evolution inasmuch as both show a spurt

in inscribed and uninscribed civic coinages in the immediate post-Maurya epoch. Urban centers in the north include Erikachha (present-day Erich) and Mugamukha (located close and most likely assimilated into Erich), while those to the south include Eran and Vidisha (both known today as such), Bhāgilā (probably assimilated in Vidisha), Kurarā (possibly the modern-day Kurwai), and Nandinagara (Nadner in Hoshangabad district, Madhya Pradesh). There is one more series of coins that bear the name Madāvika and it is plausible that this was yet another urban center, but its location cannot be identified with certainty. All these urban centers are located on or in the vale of the river Betwa as it runs its course northward, through the plains of Malwa, to merge with the Yamuna. All except Eran have struck civic coinages in the name of the cities.

The coins of northern and southern series show certain conspicuous traits. Both demonstrate a range of manufacturing techniques, but casting is conspicuously absent in the southern series. Both have a unique range of copper punch-marked coinages—in the case of the northern or Erich series, they almost invariably have inscriptions, whereas in case of the southern or Eran-Vidisha series, they are both inscribed as well as uninscribed. The southern series also has a lesser proportion of die-struck coinage, which manifests itself only in the types that are attributed to Kurara. The civic issues of the northern series bear the names of Erikaccha and Mugamukha, while those in the south bear the names Vedisa, Bhāgilā, Kurarā and Nadinagara (Plate 4.9). In the north the Erikachha issues are die-struck as well as punch-marked with a preponderance of the former kind, whereas in the south all cities strike coins using dies except Bhāgilā, where the coinage is predominantly punch-marked.

The Northern (Erich) Coinage

There were presumably two urban centers in and around the ancient site of Erich, as evidenced from civic issues bearing names of two cities—Erikachha and Mugamukha. The coins of these two cities are radically different, Erikachha coinage being far more varied in terms of metals, types, and striking techniques employed (Jha 1999). Mugamukha coins are of a single type (bearing a frog), of lead and are die-struck (Plate 4.10). Erikachha coins are of copper, bronze, brass, and lead and are manufactured by casting, die-striking, and punch-marking (striking with multiple dies) (Plate 4.11). The simultaneous circulation of these coins indicates a flaw in the predominant numismatic argument, which generally places cast and punch-marked coins earlier than the die-struck ones. The chief regiospecific attributes of these coins include symbolism—almost every coin type incorporates a palm tree. Of secondary importance are an ass and a strung bow and arrow. The association of the ass and the palm tree is noteworthy because of its reflection on the Balarāma cult (cf. the mythical story of Balarāma killing an ass-demon by hurling him over a palm tree), which seems to have predominated in this region, as evidenced by the palm-tree pillar capitals known from the region.

The other series of Erich coins is a nominative one, and although the general consensus is to indicate a demise of the civic coinage before these come into fore, there is nothing to suggest this development in the coins themselves. One of the important coin types from this series bears the name of Āṣāḍhamitra, who is known as a *senāpati*

from the brick inscription. A noteworthy change in his title is that on the coins he calls himself "amātya" (minister) and the "Lord of Daśārṇa" (Plate 4.12).

The predominant subseries of nominative issues of Erich has a strong regiospecific flavor in terms of their manufacturing technique (Bhandare 2003). The coins in this category are made by striking the reverse with a single die and then applying the legend on obverse as two separate punches. Such a method of manufacture is unique in the broad realm of ancient Indian numismatics and serves as an excellent example of how regiospecific elements help in constructing a numismatic series, which can be effectively utilized as source of historical evidence. There are two groups of kings, one whose names end in "mitra" (Sāhasamitra and Iśvaramitra) and the other whose names end in "sena" (Sahasrasena, Mitrasena, Amitasena, and Mahā(sena?)) (Plate 4.13). A clear indication of succession between these two groups is afforded by coins of Sahasrasena, which are counterstruck upon those of Iśvaramitra (Plate 4.15). This establishes the fact the Senas succeeded the Mitras. All names mentioned in the brick inscription of Āśāḍhamitra also have "mitra"-endings and a gradual aggrandizement in titles is evident in this family—the early members call themselves commanders, the last two in the inscription (Āśāḍhamitra and his father Mūlamitra) as "commanders" and "Lords of Daśārṇa." Sāhasamitra is known from his coins as "great commander" (Mahāsenapati) and finally, Iśvaramitra is styled as "Rājā." The successor Sena kings continue with this regal title "Rājā" until Amitasena, plausibly the latest of the group, calls himself a "Mahārājā."

The "Southern" (Eran-Vidisha) Coinage

The picture in south Daśārṇa is more complicated than it is in the north. Contrary to the linear narrative offered in the puranic sequences, we find five urban centers thriving concomitantly—they are Eran, Vidisha, Bhāgilā, Kurarā, and Nandinagara. The coinage is exclusively copper and as in other regions, there are two kinds of coins circulating—civic and nominative—and there is also a large bulk of uninscribed coins, which resemble the nominative coinages in their fabric, metal, and method of striking. Civic issues are known in four centers, namely, Vidisha, Bhāgilā, Kurarā, and Nandinagara. With the exception of Bhāgilā, they are all die-struck. Nominative coins are known to bear the names of Viṣṇumitra, Dāmabhada, Vajimita, Vasumita, Sujeṭha, Bhānumitra, Ravibhūti (or "Revabhūti"), Hathideva, Bhoomidata, Nārāyaṇamitra, and Vasuśarmā. With exception of Vasumitra and Sujeṭha, issues of all other rulers are punch-marked. Two Sātavāhana rulers, namely Siri Sātakaṇi and Siri Sāti, are known to have struck coins in the regiospecific copper punch-marked tradition of south Daśārṇa, which clearly alludes to a dynastic succession. As the bulk of numismatic evidence suggests, die-struck and punch-marked coins circulated alongside one another, so the typical numismatic premise of sequencing coins on the basis of manufacturing technology falls once again in the case of this coinage.

The nominative copper punch-marked coins of the south Daśārṇa region have three, four, or five symbols, all of which conform broadly to a specific spatial orientation so far as their placement on the coin goes. Thus, in case of the four- and five-symbol coins, one almost invariably sees the curvy lines with aquatic creatures placed at the south on the coins, an animate depiction (mostly an elephant) to the east,

a distinctive symbol to the west, the legend to the north, and a tree-in-railing or a triangle-headed standard-in-railing in the center. The distinctive symbol served as a "classmark" and had a specific attributive function. A few symbols recognized as such include the lotus (specific to the Bhagila series), a "taurine within a U-shaped bracket," and the "Ujjain" symbol with one of its orbs modified with the addition of a crescent. In certain cases the classmark provides a link between the inscribed and uninscribed coin types of a regiospecific coin series. It therefore acts as an important attributive tool for the uninscribed coins, which would have been unattributable otherwise.

This observation is important, for in the case of the inscribed Sātavāhana issues from the region struck by Siri Sātakaṇi, the "classmark" is most certainly of a dynastic kind—an "Ujjain" symbol with one orb modified with a crescent (Plate 4.14). The presence of this mark on certain uninscribed coins therefore indicates the attribution of these to the Sātavāhanas. It is further interesting to note that the same mark is found counterstruck on uninscribed coins of a series classified by another classmark, a "taurine" symbol placed within a U-shaped bracket (Plate 4.15). As one symbol with marked dynastic associations is found conspicuously obliterating another, one would infer that this latter symbol also would have had dynastic bearings, and the counterstriking would indicate a dynastic interface. This recognition brings us to an important juncture in the study of inscribed/uninscribed copper punch-marked coins of south Daśārṇa.

The presence of the "taurine in a U-shaped bracket" symbol and its ostensibly dynastic character helps us to group a variety of nominative coins bearing it as of a single dynasty. For the sake of convenience we will call it the "M" dynasty. It includes the issues of Hathideva, Bhoomidata, Nārāyaṇamitra, and Vasuśarmā, all of whose coins have the particular symbol on them (Plate 4.16a and 4.16b). The names of these four rulers roughly conform to the list of Kaṇva rulers mentioned in the Purāṇas. The first ruler therein is Vāsudeva, whereas coins name him as Hathideva, the second puranic ruler is Bhoomimitra, whereas on coins we have Bhoomidata; the third puranic name Nārāyaṇa and that seen from coins match each other, except the coins call him Nārāyaṇamitra, and the last of the "Kaṇvas" according to the Purāṇas was named Suśarman (Suśarmā), while on coins we find the name Vasuśarmā. However, numismatic evidence should take precedence in ascertaining the real names of these rulers, due to the very nature of their coins. The discrepancies further highlight the anomalies that crept in the puranic accounts when it comes to factual reporting. Although the dynastic interface between rulers of this group and the Sātavāhanas is well reflected from coins, we know that the Sātavāhana ruler who succeeded them in south Daśārṇa was Siri Sātakaṇi, and not Simuka as mentioned by the Purāṇas; nor is there any numismatic support to the puranic claim that the dynastic name for the members of the "M" dynasty was indeed Kaṇva.

It would be worthwhile to mention what numismatics and other evidence have to offer for the period immediately before the "M" dynasty in the south Daśārṇa region. It is clear from the finds of these coins that the "M" dynasty was centered on Eran, Vidisha, and Nandinagara (Nadner) among the urban centers which existed in the Betwa valley. According to the textual evidence, the dynastic antecedents of the Kaṇvas in this region were the Śuṅgas. Vāsudeva, the first Kaṇva ruler, killed Devabhūti, the last Śuṅga king. Here again coins offer an interesting bit of

evidence—Hathideva, a member of the "M" dynasty, is known to have countermarked coins of another local ruler called Ravibhūti or Revabhūti (Plate 4.17a, 4.17b, and 4.17c). The names are very close to the puranic versions Vāsudeva and Devabhūti. Reason would therefore have it that it is indeed a succession as spelled out in the puranic texts; however, there is no evidence to indicate that Vāsudeva (Hathideva of coins) was a Kaṇva or that Devabhūti (Ravibhūti/Revabhūti of coins) was a Śuṅga. The coins of Revabhūti are characterized by yet another classmark—that of a lotus. Coins of a ruler named Bhānumitra also conform to the same class as that of Revabhūti. The lotus mark links these rulers to the inscribed civic issues of a neighboring urban center, namely Bhāgilā, where it is seen next to the name of the city in the legend and most certainly has an attributive affinity. This site has been identified with the area on the outskirts of modern Vidisha town, where the Heliodoros pillar stands. The transition between Hathideva and Revabhūti is thus clearly a localized event, contrary to the "imperial transition" that the Purāṇas make it to be. This is again similar to the Kaṇva-Sātavāhana interface that the Purāṇas blow out of proportions, but which as suggested by coins, was not more than a localized event in the south Daśārṇa region.

Among the other so-called Śuṅga rulers, coins of Vasumitra and Sujeṭha (Sujyeṣṭha) are known from the south Daśārṇa region (Plate 4.18). The latter is often referred to as Vasujyeṣṭha in the Purāṇas—here we find this peculiar puranic trait of playing with "Va" happening again (cf. Vasuśarmā and Suśarmā), but in this case it is adding a "Va" to the name rather than deleting it. Both rulers have issued die-struck coins and they are typologically so distinct that one suspects whether the Purāṇas were stringing two different local rulers in the same dynastic fold. Unfortunately, they are known in too small numbers to ascertain exactly which urban center they come from; their regiospecific character therefore remains to be elucidated in finer details.

OTHER KINGS IN THE GANGETIC PLAIN

Apart from the chief regiospecific areas listed above, there are a host of other rulers whose coins have been known from the Gangetic plain. Information regarding their provenance is scanty and therefore whether they conformed to any regiospecific character cannot be satisfactorily ascertained. In the past they have been randomly attributed to one or another regiospecific series. In some cases mistakes were realized later and a proper attribution was made.

Two important regiospecific series which have been left out of the purview of this chapter are Mathura and Almora (Allan 1936: lxxxix, cviii–cxiii). The first is centered on finds at the site of Mathura, while the latter is denoted as such by a find of some coins of the series from Almora, the contemporary urban center not being identified. The names of rulers known in the Almora series are Haradatta, Śivadatta, and Śivapalita. The Mathura coins offer a very interesting array of monarchical nominative issues; civic issues in sharp contrast to other series are absent at Mathura. Another important element in the Mathura series is numismatic vestiges of Scythian rule in that city.

Among other nominative coins that are known from the Gangetic plain, those of a ruler named Gomitra are noteworthy (Plate 4.19). They were first attributed to Mathura because of a homonymous ruler in that series—but later their true attribution was ascertained by a correct rendering of the legend, which indicated quite clearly that this Gomitra was different from the Mathura Gomitra and ruled from Vārāṇā (present day Bulandshahr in U.P., Gupta 1988–1989). The important element in his coins is a direct typological link with coins of the Indo-Greek ruler Appolodotos II, whose dates have been established at c. 80–60 BCE with some certainty (Dehejia 1972). Such links, although few and far between, give us a rational and reliable dating evidence, something that is obscured completely when the monarchical issues are studied from a "Śuṅga" perspective emanating from the textual sources.

Apart from these there are other early indigenous coinages in the Gangetic plains, which give us names like Viṣṇudeva, Brahmamitra, Sūryamitra, Vāyuvarmā, Indradeva, Isipāla, etc. (Allan 1936: xciii). Mention should also be made of a unique coin mentioning the name of King Dharmapāla from Eran (Plate 4.20). An alleged coin bearing the legend "Śuṅgavarmā" has been found and immediately attributed to the Śuṅga dynasty (Bajpai 1965), notwithstanding the fact that no king named as such is known from the very dynastic lists which claim the existence of the Śuṅgas. The coin is unique, and its legend requires much scrutiny in any case, even though it is "Śuṅgavarmā" this may not readily link it with the Śuṅgas.

ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE—THE CASE FOR A HISTORICAL *SHTO DYELAT*?

We have seen how the material evidence equates with the textual in preceding sections. Both its components—namely, inscriptional and numismatic—have their drawbacks. Inscriptions may suffer from erroneous rendering and in comparison to both texts and coins are far too few in number. However, they offer firm evidence especially for persons they mention and the events they record. They also offer isochronisms both internally and as external corroboration for coins and texts.

The texts suffer from the greatest disadvantage of all—their very nature, their anachronism with the period they refer to, and their evolution which, from a historical point of view, remains largely undetermined. Apart from these, there are many other disadvantages like interpolation, compilers' and editors' bias, textual and semantic variation existing between different manuscripts, etc. Collectively they should be the least reliable source of historical information—but in fact they have loomed large in the framework we have been following. Other criticisms of this framework one may offer include:

it is largely a linear model
it does not accommodate any lateral developments
its details are distorted, and
the chronology is unreliable

So what are the discrepancies and similarities offered between these components of the evidence? Where do we stand and what needs to be done—a question that rightly

reflects the radical sentiments in the subtitle! For a start it would be worthwhile to look at a comparative presentation of what the evidence suggests so far as personalities go. The table 4.1 illustrates what we have been talking about in a nutshell.

EPILOGUE

A few words may be said about how numismatists have traditionally assessed the information at their disposal. Most of them have recognized the marked regional orientation in the coin types, and indeed coins have been described as "Ayodhya," "Ujjain," "Taxila," "Kausambi," etc., on its basis. But the approach when it comes to dating them has been, quite simply, to try to fit it into the framework put forward by protagonists of the literary school. There is a general agreement on the post-Mauryan nature of these coins, and as such the guiding beacon for their classification has been the account of the "Śuṅgas" as given in the texts and the frame of reference that emanates directly out of it. The arguments offered on internal chronology have been mainly palliative—palaeography of the legends has been one of them, manufacturing technique has been another, and certain links with preceding coinages has been the third. In short, the study of these coins has been limited to some of the intrinsic factors as noted here and we have seen, through more than one case study, how these attributes methodologically fail to provide elements for historical restructuring. The collective context of the area of circulation, the evolution of regiospecific series with respect to the growth of urbanization, and the association of coin types with the emerging urban centres has not been studied in the depth that it requires to be. Thus the extrinsic parameters of their study have largely been ignored. As a consequence, the entire approach to the numismatics of post-Mauryan north India has become isolationist and limited, confined to an antiquarian study of the objects, thereby detaching the studies from the context that would otherwise be crucial from the methodological point of view. Studies employing numismatic methods such as die studies have never been accomplished.

The recourse, on the other hand, is guided by the urge of attribution. Remarkable theories have been put forward to explain, within a set historical framework, the "explosion" of kings in the Gangetic plain in the post-Mauryan epoch. To sum up—the judgment in most cases seems to be overridden by textual sources, so the approach has been characterized by textual evidence at the cost of rationale and objectivity. The most simplistic of these theories are the attribution and identification of some rulers, again totally out of their regional context, with inscriptional mentions. The best example of this kind is the purported identity of the "ruler" mentioned in the Bodhgaya inscription in Bihar with a king known from his coins in the Pāñchāla series, spatially located in western Uttar Pradesh. On the other hand, a few radically fanciful theories put forward the following.

1. After the death of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, his empire was divided into all those regions, which yield nominative coins—thus every ruler in any series, particularly in the Gangetic plain, had a Śuṅga descent.

2. Since most of the names across the wide range of series have "mitra"-ending names, they were part of a pan-"mitra" domain across the entire north India, being

TABLE 4.1: EVIDENCE SUMMARY

Area	*Name of the Kings*	*Texts*	*Inscriptions*	*Coins*
Vatsa	Group 1			+
A.	Rādhāmita	-	-	
Kausambi	Bahasatimita	-	Khāravela,	+
B.			Pabhosa	+
Śuktimati?	Agimita	Agnimitra	-	+
		Śuṅga		+
	Sapamita	-	-	+
	Jeṭhamita	-	-	+
	Poṭhamita	-	-	+
	Pajāpatimita	-	-	+
	Bhāgavata Tevaniputa	-	Pabhosa	-
	Āśāḍhasena Vaihi-			
	dariputra	-	Pabhosa	-
	Group 2			
	Aśvaghoṣa	-		+
	Visadeva Gāgiputa	-	Bharhut	-
	Agarāju Gotiputa	-	Bharhut	-
	Dhanabhūti Vachhi-		Bharhut	+
	puta	-	Bharhut	-
	Jyeṣṭhamitra	-	-	-
Kosala	Mūladeva	-	-	+
A. Ayodhya	Vāyudeva	-	-	+
B. Śrāvastī?	Visākhadeva	-	-	+
	Dhanadeva	-	Ayodhya	+
	Naradatta	-	-	+
	Jyeṣṭhadatta	-	-	+
	Śivadatta	-	-	+
Panchala	Dāmagupta	-	Sealing	+
A.	Vangapāla	-	Pabhosa	+
Ahichhatra	Yajnapāla	-	-	+
B.	Rudragupta	-	-	+
Kampilya	Jayagupta	-	-	+
	Bhadraghoṣa	-	-	+
	Sūryamitra	-	-	+
	Phālgunimitra	-	-	+
	Bhānumitra	-	-	+
	Bhoomimitra	-	-	+
	Dhruvamitra	-	-	+
	Agnimitra	-	-	+
	Vishnumitra	-	-	+
	Indramitra	-	-	+
	Jayamitra	-	-	+

Area	Name of the Kings	Texts	Inscriptions	Coins
Daśārṇa (North) A. Erich	Dāmamitra	-	Erich, Musanagar	-
	Śatānika	-	Erich	-
	Aditamitra	-	Erich	-
	Mūlamitra	-	Erich	-
	Āśāḍhamitra	-	Erich	+
	Sāhasamitra	-	-	+
	Iśvaramitra	-	-	+
	Sahasrasena	-	Sealing	+
	Mitrasena	-	-	+
	Mahā(sena?)	-	-	+
	Amitasena	-	-	+
Daśārṇa (South) A. Eran B. Vidisha C. Bhāgilā D. Kurarā E. Nandinagara F. Madavika?	Viṣṇumitra	-	-	+
	Vajimitra	Vajramitra	-	+
	Dāmabhadra	-	-	+
	Bhāgabhadra	Bhāgavata?	Besnagar	-
	Vasumitra	Sumitra	-	+
	Sujeṭha	Vasujyeṣṭha	-	+
	Bhānumitra	-	-	+
	Ravibhūti/Revabhūti	Devabhūti	-	+
	The "M" dynasty -			+
	Hathideva	Vāsudeva	-	+
	Bhoomidata	Bhoomimitra	-	+
	Nārāyaṇamitra	Nārāyana	-	+
	Vasusarmā	Suśarmā	-	+

politically interrelated and/or identical personalities when the same names appear, i.e., "Agnimitra" from Pāñchāla and "Agnimitra" from the Kausambi series were one and the same persons. Further, this ruler would be equated with the "Agnimitra" of Śuṅga line mentioned by the Purāṇas and Kālidāsa.

3. Many of the kings known from inscriptions as well as coins were Śuṅga feudatories and as such denote the period of "imperial fragmentation."

Since most of these theories draw directly on the "Śuṅga" hegemony, it would be worthwhile to assess whether the evidence at our disposal really indicates that any such "Śuṅga" empire existed in this time. The only reason for this belief has been the puranic mentions of Puṣyamitra and his exploits, supported weakly by two inscriptional mentions, viz., the reckoning of one of the Pabhosa inscription in the tenth year of a so-called Śuṅga ruler Odraka/Udāka, and two words at the beginning of one of the Bharhut inscriptions which roughly translate as "during the Śuṅga rule." None of this evidence is critically attested—the first has been widely contested, especially for the meaning of the word "Udāka," and the second is too scanty to prove any point even after the words are regarded as they are. Coins of one of the rulers

mentioned in same Bharhut inscription, viz., Agarāju, are known, and they conform to the regiospecific series of one of the urban centers in Vatsa. Coins of two rulers in the Pabhosa inscription are known, viz., Vangapāla and Bahasatimita—one of them conforms to the Pāñchāla series and the other to the Kausambi/Vatsa realm. None of them suggest any "Śuṅga" connection. The name of a "Senāpati Puṣyamitra" does occur in the Ayodhya inscription of Dhana(deva) but here too, the inference that he was an imperial overlord of any sort is entirely conjectural.

The historical picture that coins offer is entirely contrary to the accepted notion of a Śuṅga empire. In a stark contrast with the puranic accounts reflecting a linear succession to an "imperial" throne, what we see is a spurt in urban centers, supporting localized money economies and a gradual demise of the "uniform" silver coinage into several regiospecific coinages that are a quaint mixture of civic and nominative (monarchical in most cases in the Gangetic plain) series. The names of rulers one gets to know from these are different from those gathered from any other sources. There are a few overlaps with inscriptional mentions, but they clearly indicate that most of the textual mentions are either modified or putative, in consequence debilitating the historical utility of the textual evidence further. Furthermore, coins clearly demonstrate other significant drawbacks of the textual evidence, namely, its exclusivity, linearity, and intermittency when it comes to describing historical events like political successions. A comparison between texts on one hand and coins and inscriptions on the other for the list of ten "Śuṅga" kings would illustrate the point. First, the coins convincingly indicate that such a dynasty, if ever it was called Śuṅga, existed in south Daśārṇa and not Magadha. Second, only four out of ten "Śuṅga" rulers are corroborated from coins. Three numismatic mentions show their names have been misquoted in the Purāṇas, one (Agnimitra) doesn't actually exist in the south Daśārṇa series, and two (Vasumitra and Sujyeṣṭha) indicate their coinage spread over different urban centers as compared to the other two, differing in style and technique, and thereby hinting at a possible dynastic dissociation. When it comes to the "imperial successors" of the Śuṅgas, i.e., the Kaṇvas, coins indicate that what is being talked about in the Purāṇas is no more than a local dynasty (which we have called the "M" dynasty) and the names of three out of four have been misquoted. The political interface that the Purāṇas attribute for the Kaṇva Dynasty is Śuṅga-Kaṇva at its anterior end and Kaṇva-Āndhra at its posterior end. In the first case, we see from coins that it is no more than a regional and localized political transition, misquoted for the names it involves, and in the latter case, the "Āndhra" ruler who succeeds the last "Kaṇva" ruler is not the one mentioned in the Purāṇas, but his son/grandson. In short, the puranic mentions are nothing but a series of details confused in time and space. "Śuṅgas," if they ever existed, were probably as localized as the rest of the groups we know from coins in terms of their political prowess. Coins offer an entirely different picture of the post-Mauryan fragmentation, which links two singularly important phenomena of ancient Indian history—the fall of an empire and a concomitant spurt in urbanization with an increase in localized money economy. They also hint a probable non sequitur—the fall of historical jargon that makes random use of terms like "Śuṅga supremacy" and "Śuṅga art."

PLATE 4.1

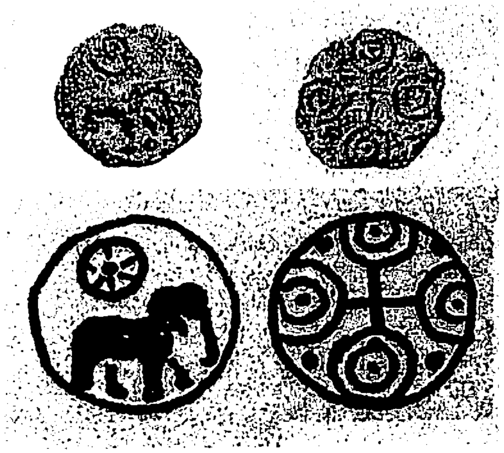


Plate 4.1a

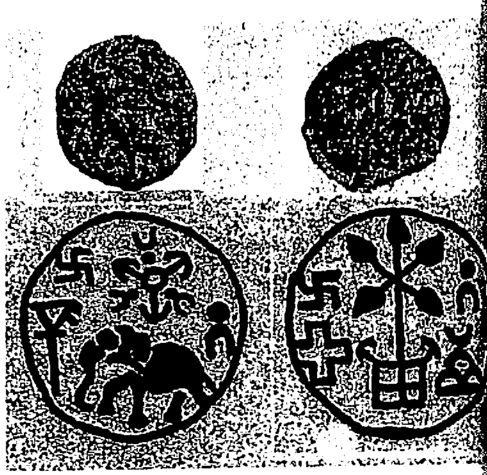


Plate 4.1b

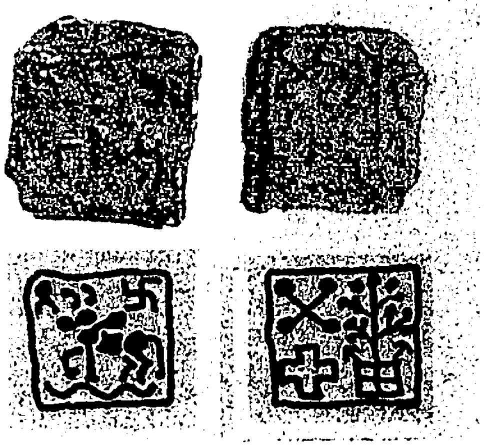


Plate 4.1c

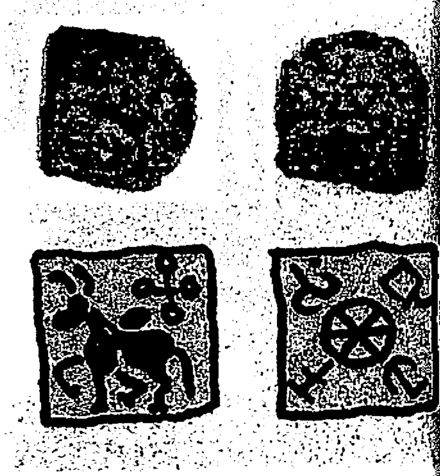


Plate 4.1d

PLATE 4.2

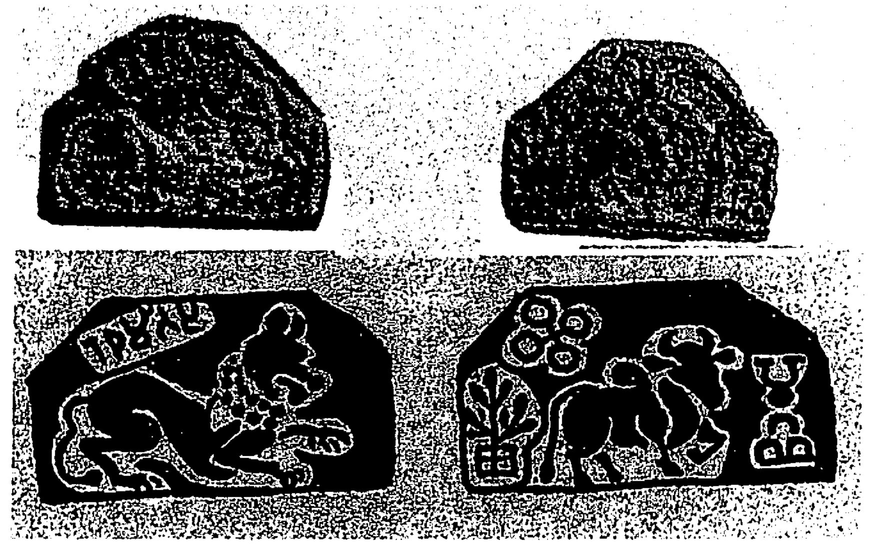


PLATE 4.3

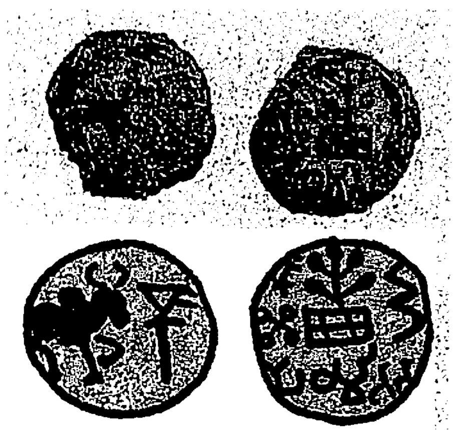


Plate 4.3a

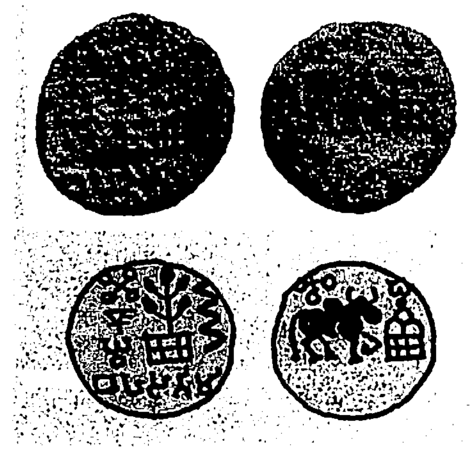


Plate 4.3b

PLATE 4.4

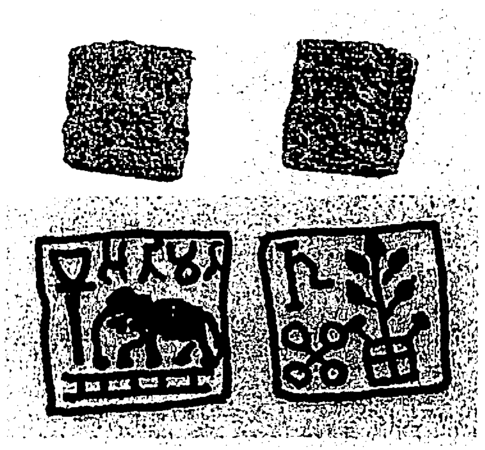


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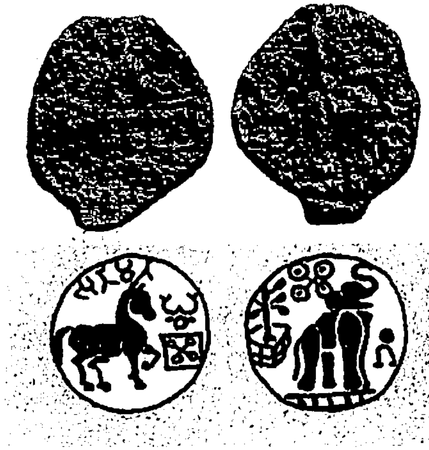


Plate 4.4b

PLATE 4.5

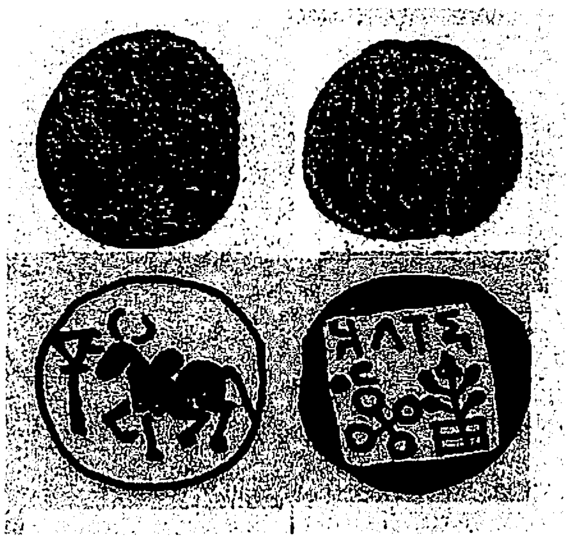


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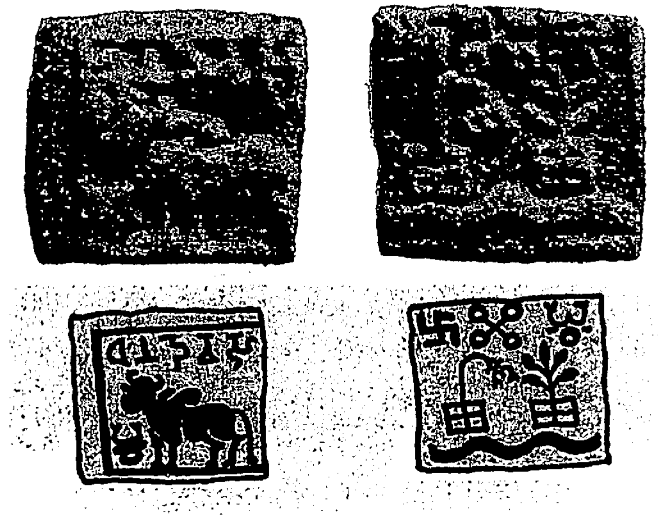


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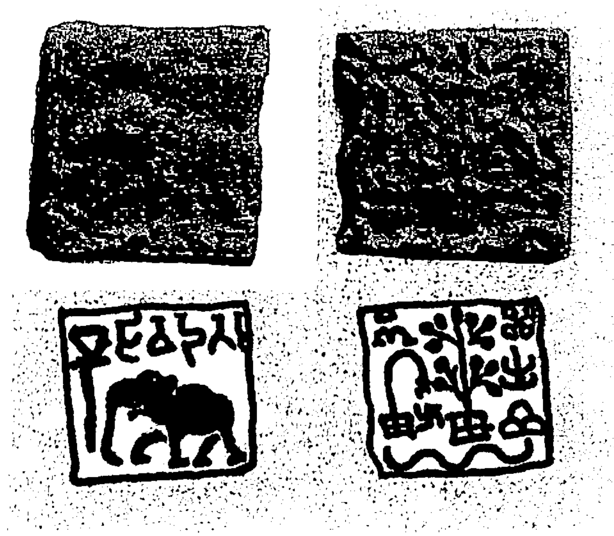


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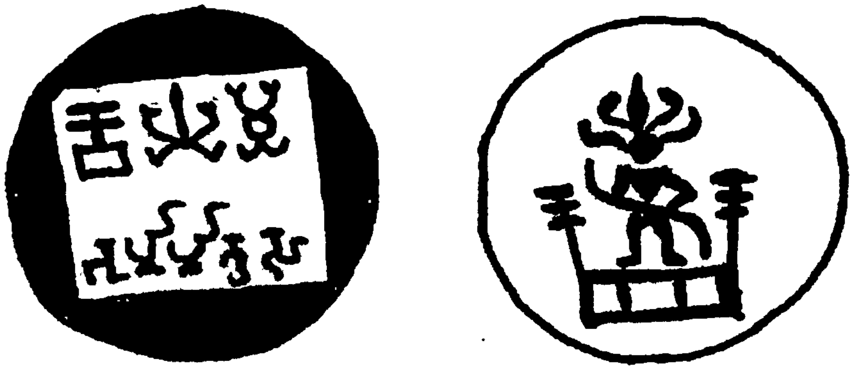


PLATE 4.9

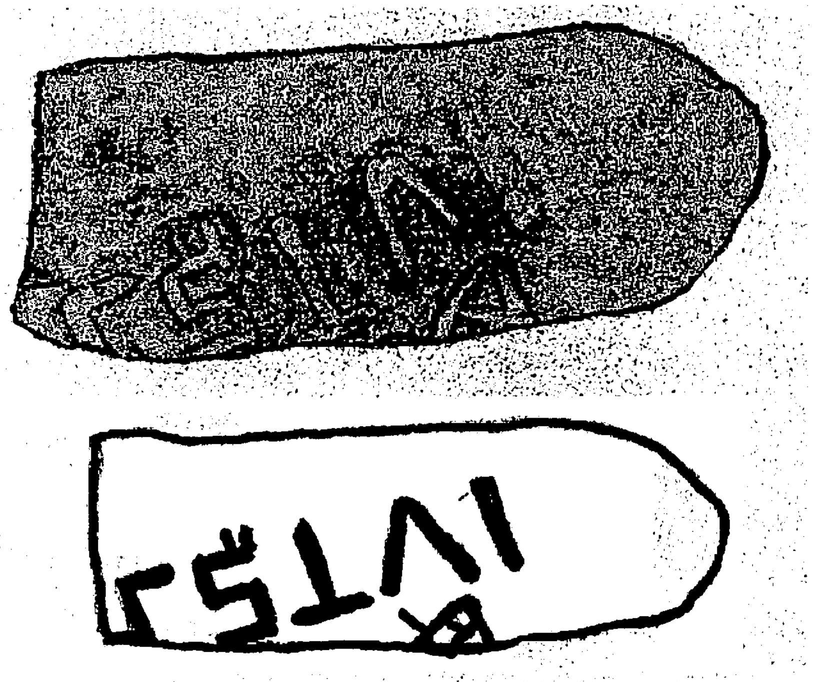


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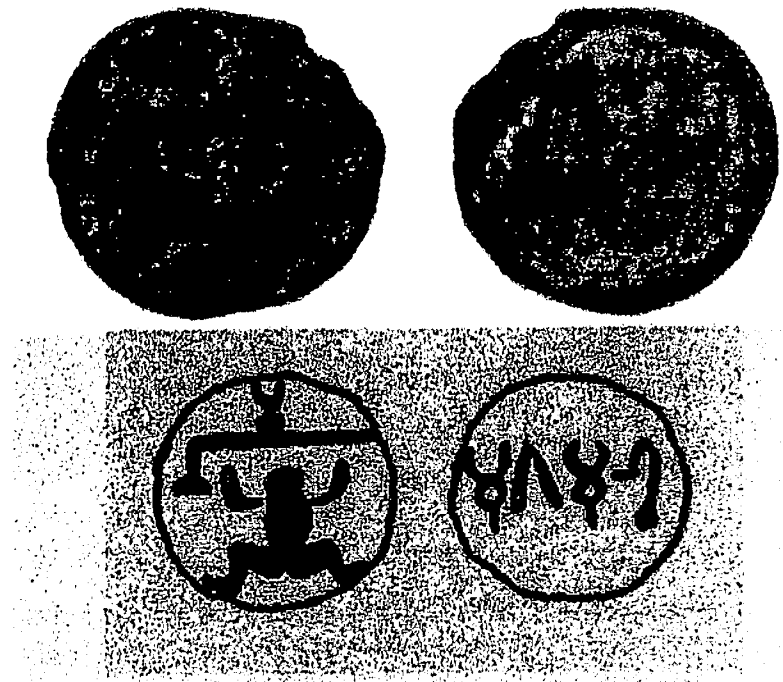


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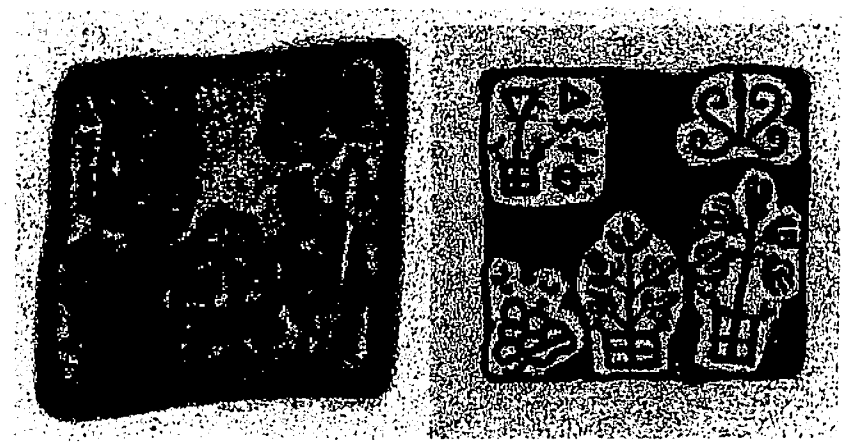


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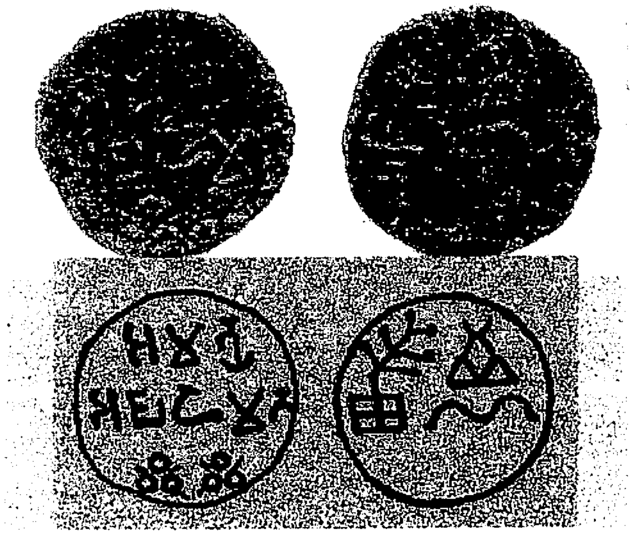


PLATE 4.13

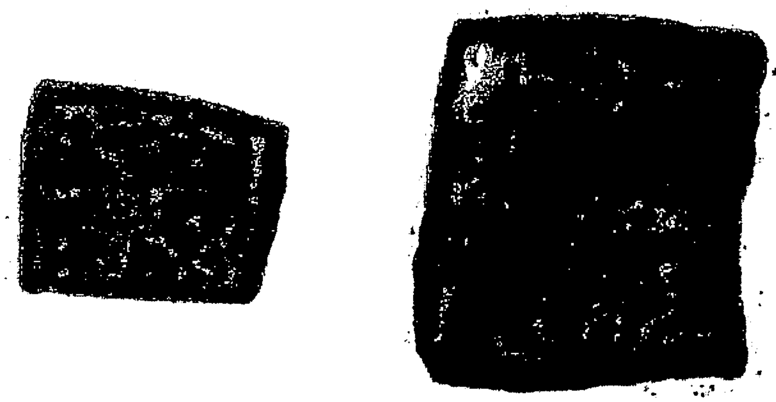


PLATE 4.14

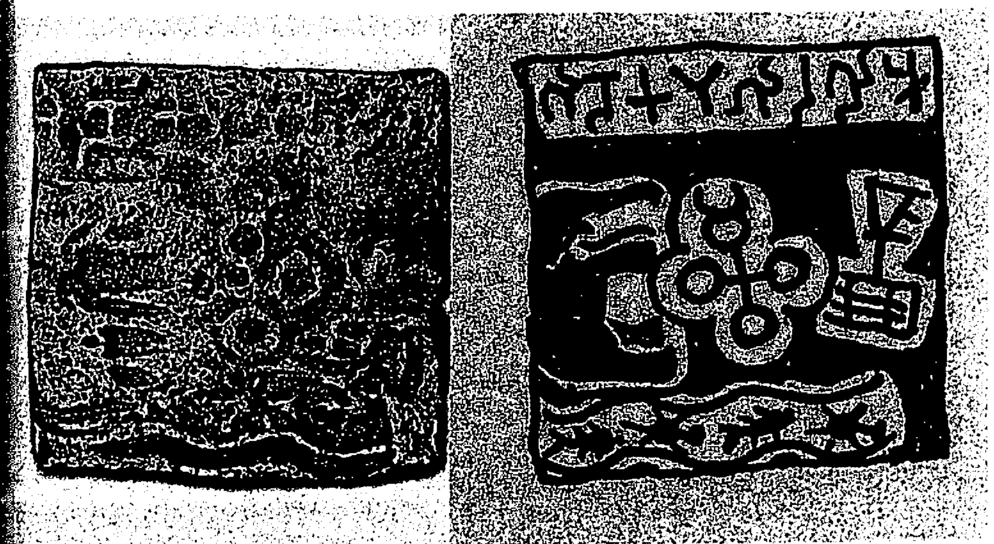


PLATE 4.15

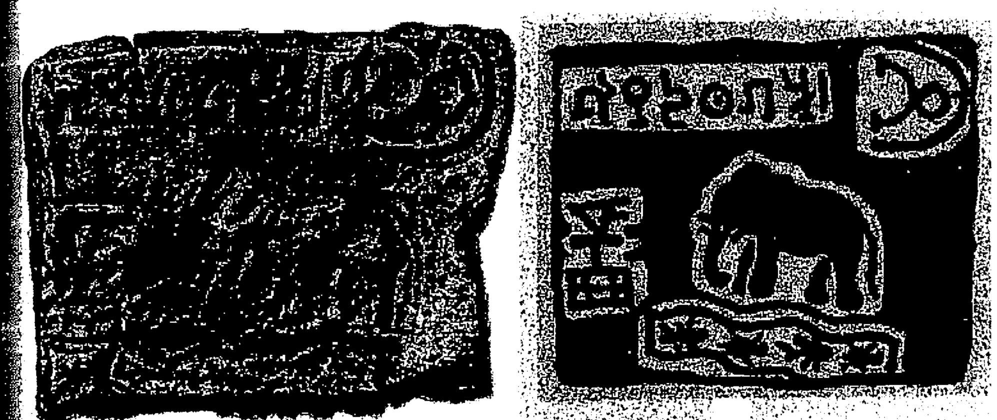


PLATE 4.16



Plate 4.16a

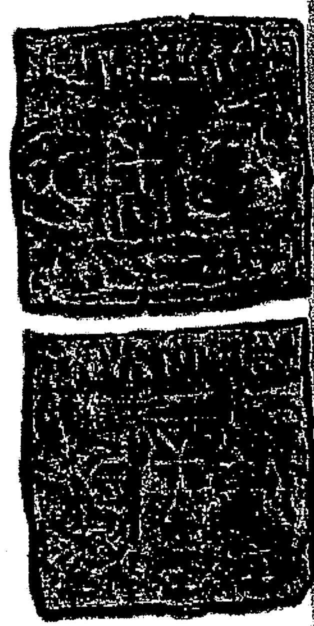


Plate 4.16b

PLATE 4.17

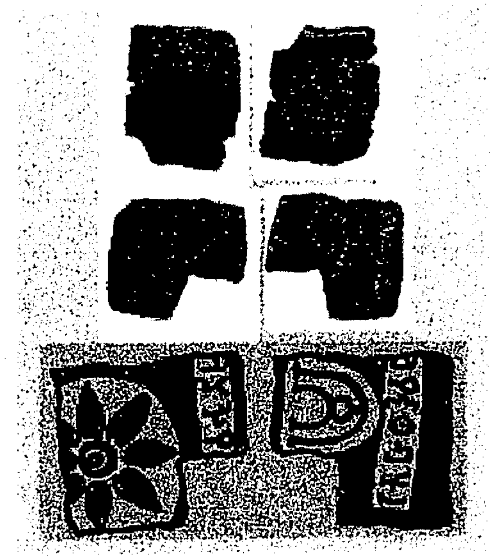


Plate 4.17a



Plate 4.17b

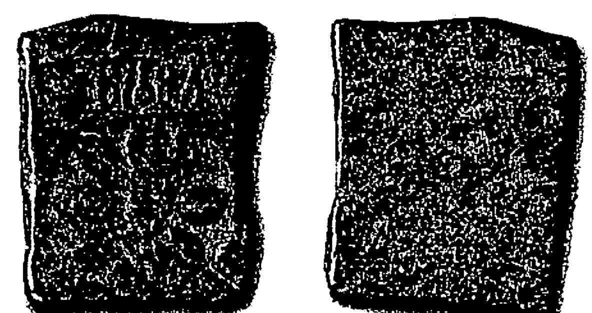


Plate 4.17c

PLATE 4.18

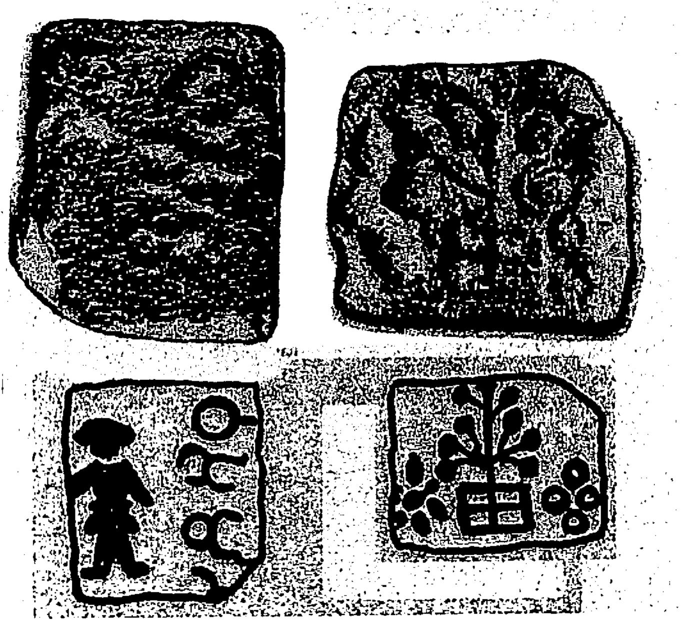


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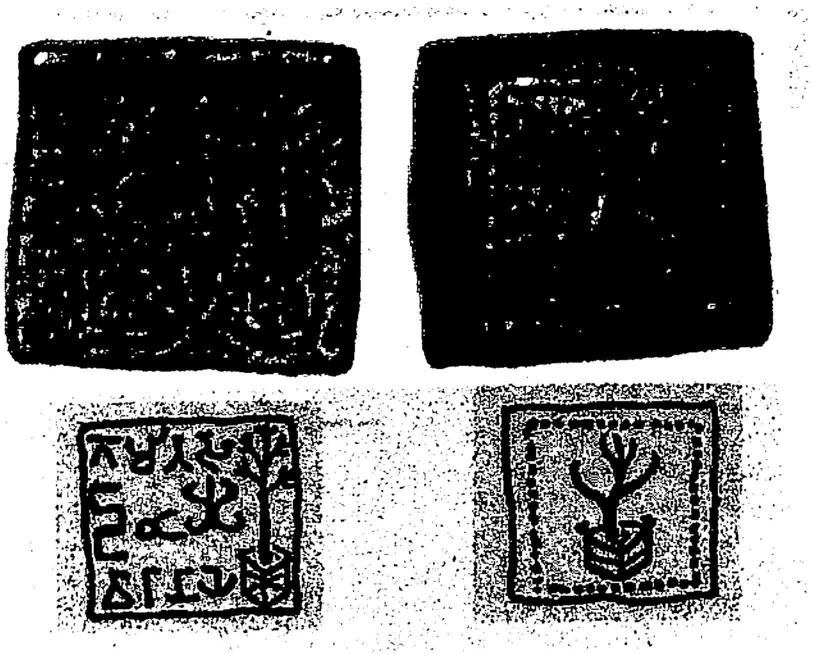
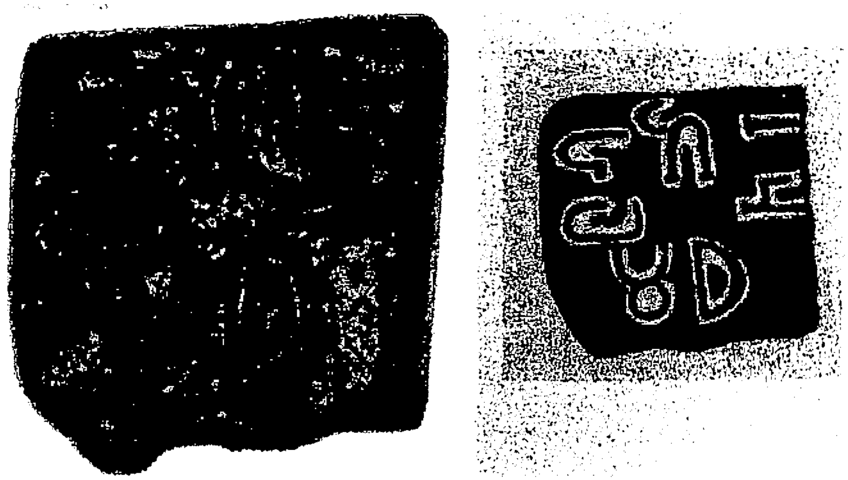


PLATE 4.20



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5

Inscribed Pots, Emerging Identities

The Social Milieu of Trade

Himanshu Prabha Ray

"Wherever a merchant *(setthi)* settles you have a city *(pattana)*"—Kannada proverb[1]

This chapter is an attempt at defining the social milieu of trade[2] in peninsular India between the fourth century BCE and the fourth century CE, the objective being to highlight the social factors that determined economic activity.[3] It accepts trade as an activity integral to all societies, rather than as an offshoot of settled agricultural production, as has been traditionally proposed.[4] It also supports the autonomy of trading activity vis-à-vis political organization. Rulers certainly tapped the revenues from trade, but neither controlled nor initiated trade.[5] Trade involved a complex range of transactions, with gifts to those in authority, and prestige commodities required by

[1] The term *pattana* derives from *pattana* or market town. The *Arthaśāstra* (II.6.3) refers to *pattana* as a coastal settlement where traders have to pay a part of their goods as duty (II.28.40) and it occurs in Tamil as *pattinam* with the same meaning.

[2] The term "trade" is used to encompass both exchange and trade, though elsewhere the author has discussed the differences between the two (Ray 1998).

[3] "Economic processes—including market processes—are embedded in cultural norms and practices (from destroying a surplus to leaving a tip), institutional structures (from kinship relations to joint-stock companies), internalized rules and knowledges (from timing a gift to paying in a shop), and legal and political frameworks (from village hierarchies to laws of contract" (Slater and Tonkiss 2001: 101).

[4] In R. S. Sharma's formulation, the state and urbanism originate together and owe their beginnings to the use of iron for advanced food-producing techniques, which produced a surplus. This surplus in turn maintained "priests, administrators, professional soldiers and the capital consisting of the ruler's establishment, artisans, traders, etc." (Sharma 1983: 16). Ghosh countered this formulation and proposed that "surplus" was a social product (Ghosh 1973).

[5] Manu (VIII, 219) states that the king was the final authority for settling disputes between guilds. The *Arthaśāstra* refers to the collection of revenue at the city gates (II.21.1), but also lists several exemptions in the case of goods required for rituals and ceremonies (II.21.18).

powerful groups and residents of cities at one end of the scale, while barter and monetary exchanges were the norm at the local and regional level.[6]

Trading activity by its very nature was mobile, cut across political frontiers, and as a result created its own networks of communication and information transfer. It is suggested here that in the historical period, one significant use of writing was for trading activity. The shared culture that extended across not only South Asia but also the Indian Ocean was part of a literate tradition, which was by no means controlled by the ruler or the brahmin, but included Buddhist and Jaina monks, navigators, and trading and crafts groups. Writing facilitated storing of information cumulative knowledge promoted new genres of cultural and artistic expression and aided ordering of information under numeric and alphabetic heads and the use of maps (Goody 2001: 144).

These networks may be identified in the archaeological record by specimens of writing on pottery, seals, and sealings and by inscriptions on stone and copper plates. This chapter will primarily focus on patterns of use and distribution of the written records in an attempt to highlight both temporal and spatial variations. The larger issue is to define the changing frontiers of trade and the complex ways in which writing aided the construction of a literate culture. In contrast to the *dhamma-lipi* of Aśoka inscribed on rocks or pillars, the epigraphs of the post-Mauryan period record donations by a cross section of the community and were located within monastic establishments in peninsular India, largely Buddhist. The use of copper plates for recording marks another turning point in the history of writing and is dated to the middle of the fourth century in the peninsula. The earliest examples of copper-plate charters belong to the Iksvakus, the Visnukundins, Brhatpalayanas, and Salankayanas, perhaps one of the earliest being two copper-plate grants of Ehavala Camtamula found at Kallacheruvu village, west Godavari district (Hanumantha Rao et al. 1998: 191). These inscriptions have been studied with reference to the emergence of the feudal order (Sharma 1965) and patterns of patronage and notions of kingship (Miller 1992). The attempt here is to utilize these as social markers of literate groups, which included religious clergy and trading communities, and to analyze them for defining transformations in trading networks.

This chapter, however, cannot address several other related questions such as the charting of transoceanic boundaries, the domestic, ritual, and political manifestations of commodities, the linguistic and ethnic affiliation of trading partners, and many others that have been discussed in a longer study (Ray 2003). But perhaps it would be best to start with a brief overview of the diverse cultural landscape of peninsular India in the first millennium BCE, as this is basic to an understanding of later developments.

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

In the second–first millennium BCE, peninsular India was home to iron-using

[6] The *Arthaśāstra* provides an interesting array of possibilities for the acquisition of commodities. For example, horses could be obtained as gifts *(panyagarika)*, purchased, obtained in war, bred in the stables, received in return for help, or temporarily borrowed (II.30.1).

megalithic communities, and social integration was measured by the construction of large monuments of stone, often sepulchral in nature. Chronologically, the Iron Age megalithic sites span several centuries from 1200 BCE to 300 CE and extend across all regions of peninsular India, with the exception of the western Deccan encompassing parts of the present states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Of the total number of 1,933 sites discovered so far, the largest concentration (34 percent) is in Karnataka, followed by 31 percent in Tamilnadu (Moorti 1994).[7] A more recent survey of published literature suggests a similar database of 2,207 megalithic sites. Of these, 1,668 were cemeteries, 55 were habitations, 128 were habitations and burials, and the association of 356 was unclear (Brubaker 2000–2001).

A two-tiered settlement hierarchy is in evidence, with twenty-six sites being more than five hectares in extent, each capable of supporting a population of approximately 1,000 residents, while a majority of settlements were smaller than this. The distribution pattern of the larger sites is significant, and some of these may have served as regional centers, as these are located along routes which continued into the early centuries CE. A majority of the larger sites are evenly distributed within the subregions of peninsular India, with the sole exception of the Coimbatore-Madurai uplands, where fourteen of the twenty-six large sites are located (Moorti 1994: table 2.6). It may also be pointed out that the core region of local chiefs as evident from the archaeological record, namely, the Coimbatore-Madurai uplands, did not coincide with centers of Mauryan interaction as indicated by the Aśokan inscriptions in the Karnataka-Andhra area. Clearly then we need to rethink the role of the Mauryan Empire in initiating change in peninsular India. But the immediate question here relates to the intersite and intrasite evidence for trade and exchange.

The distribution pattern of megalithic sites indicates the occurrence of about seventy sites (out of a total of 1,933 sites) within a distance of twenty kilometers of the known iron-ore zones. 60 percent of the sites, on the other hand, have no mineral or ore resources in the vicinity (Moorti 1994: 16, 108). Yet iron objects, especially weapons, are of widespread occurrence both in burials and at settlement sites in peninsular India. In fact, the data from ninety-two burials which were studied yielded a total of 285 weapons. After iron, gold was an important resource mined and exchanged by the local megalithic communities. Seven settlement sites, 148 burial sites and twenty-two habitation-cum-burial sites are known to have been located in the vicinity of gold resources. Gold was not only mined but also exchanged, as is evident from finds of gold ornaments at widely dispersed sites (Moorti 1994: 14–5; also Ray 1994: chapter 2). Radiocarbon dates for a sample of charred wood found in an old working in the Hatti mine in Karnataka suggest much earlier beginnings for goldworking in the region in the eighth century BCE (Allchin 1981). A distinctive bead-making tradition is evident at the megalithic sites of Mahurjhari in Vidarbha, Kodumanal in Coimbatore district, and Arkamedu. This is markedly different from practices adopted either by the

[7] The quantification in Moorti's study (1994) is based on published material. Much of this data has been generated by a random recording of sites and not from systematic surveys. It is possible that these figures would change with inputs from exhaustive archaeological explorations.

Harappan and chalcolithic groups or the bead makers of modern Cambay (Francis 2002: 158).

In addition to the inland network, there are indications of the participation of these Iron Age communities in a wider trading network, incorporating sites in north India as well as those in Sri Lanka (Ray 1994: chapter 2). Indicators of this are provided by finds of horse teeth and bones from the early protohistoric period at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka (Prickett-Fernando 1990: 63). The horse is not endemic within Sri Lanka and its presence in a clearly stratified context indicates its import as early as the fourth century BCE (Coningham 1999: 11). Horse burials with trappings and ornaments occur in a Megalithic context in central India, Andhra, and Tamilnadu, at sites such as Khairwada, Bhagimohari, Naikund, Mahurjhari, Takalghat-Khapa, Uppalapadu, and Kunattur.[8] Other significant finds include plain grey ware shards from Anuradhapura Citadel area and Tissamaharama, which are associated with the Painted Grey Ware in north India.

Thus there is clear evidence not only for trade and exchange but also for an increase in conflict and aggression within the Iron Age communities of peninsular India in the first millennium BCE, as compared to earlier levels. In addition, the manpower required for the construction of megalithic monuments indicates mobilization and organization of labor by these societies. The variability in the scale of the megaliths ranging from simple urn burials at one end of the scale to large stone circles enclosing elaborate chambers at the other indicates "a multitude of small, predominantly locally oriented systems of varying scale and geographic extent" (Brubaker forthcoming). This supports the presence of armed and organized communities in several regions of peninsular India in the first millennium BCE.

The western Deccan may be differentiated from other subregions of peninsular India in that there is no evidence for a megalithic substratum in the area. Around1000 BCE, settlements by copper-using communities were abandoned in the western Deccan largely on account of increasing aridity, and the core area shifted to Vidarbha in central India. A few sites such as Prakash (Period II), Maheshwar and Navdatoli (Period IV) in the middle reaches of the Narmada and Tapti valleys were reoccupied by iron-using groups in the pre-Mauryan period. Along the coast, the site of Bharuch provides evidence for a settlement dated in the latter half of the first millennium BCE and surrounded by a mud rampart (Ray 1986: chapter 3). These sites also indicate the presence of Buddhist monastic centers in the region, and remnants of third to second century brick *stūpas* have been found at Maheshwar, Kasrawad, about 5 kilometers from it, and at Pauni.

A change in settlement pattern occurs around the second to first centuries BCE and indicates both quantitative increases in the number of sites as well as a qualitative improvement in the nature of construction. The absence of a megalithic substratum in

[8] Moorti (1994: chapter 4). Seneviratne refers to the find of carnelian and agate beads in the Ibbankatuwa cist burials dated from the seventh through the fourth centuries BCE and suggests that the carnelian may have been imported as raw material from the Deccan and turned into beads at the site of Anuradhapura. Anuradhapura and Mantai have yielded several varieties of semiprecious stones imported from India and worked into beads locally (1996: table 1).

the western Deccan is reflected in the emergence of market centers along the trade routes. Numismatic and epigraphic data would suggest that power was held by some form of an urban corporate body also referred to by the term *nigama* (Gupta 1971).[9] The resource base for these centers was varied. While settlements such as Bharuch, Sopara, Chaul, etc. located along the Konkan coast derived revenue from coastal trade, others located further inland such as in the upper Godavari and Bhima basins accessed the fertile agricultural potential of the region. Even in the coastal area there was variation in the functions of the sites. Thus Bharuch was predominantly a commercial center defended by a rampart, while Sopara was not only a commercial center but also had administrative and religious functions. Kalyan, on the other hand, had commercial as well as religious functions, an important religious center in its vicinity being that of Kanheri (Ray 1986: 82).

In contrast to the western Deccan, early habitation in Andhra was marked by a concentration of megalithic sites along the river Krishna. In the coastal region, transformation in the nature of sites clearly coincides with the Mauryan period, indicators of contact including an Aśokan inscription and the earliest *stūpa* at Amaravati dated to the fourth through the third centuries BCE.[10] It is significant that the sites of Dharanikota and Amaravati are located at the point up to which the river Krishna is navigable and may be defined as landing places for the coastal traffic. The river Krishna takes a sharp turn at this spot, and this link of Amaravati with the river is preserved in a stele discovered during clearance of the site in 1958–59. Engraved on one of the faces is the legend: "the *gosthi* called Vanda at Dhanyakataka" together with the representation of waters (Ghosh and Sarkar 1964–1965: 175).[11]

In the Telengana region in the interior, as also in the coastal areas of Andhra, there is evidence for culture change from the third-second centuries BCE onward, largely as a result of interaction between the local megalithic communities and trading groups from the north, often accompanied by Buddhist monks and nuns. The results of this

[9] The *nigama* of Karahakata in the Deccan is mentioned in the second-century BCE inscriptions of the Buddhist site of Bharhut in central India (Cunningham 1879: 131, no. 16). Similarly, there are references to the *nigama* of Dhanyakataka along the east coast in Andhra: *Epigraphia Indica* 15 (1919–1920): 263. Both the *gosthi* and the *nigama* existed at Dhanyakataka, and a relief from the stele at Amaravati refers to the *gosthi* called Vamda, while another was the gift of Dhamnakadaka *nigama*. An inscription from Amaravati refers to a gift from the *nigama* of Chhadaka headed by *setthin* or bankers: *Epigraphica Indica* 10 (1909–1910) Appendix: 149, no. 1261.

[10] Archaeological excavations conducted at the twin site of Dharanikota have provided evidence for five periods of occupation from fourth-third centuries BCE to the eleventh century CE. Period I was characterized by the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW), fragments of inscribed potsherds, fragment of a pillar edict, etc. Period II (second century BCE to the first century CE) was marked by the continuation of the NBPW, punch-marked coins, sculptured panels resembling those of Bharhut, and bricks used in the construction of the gateway (47x30x9 cms; 42x21x9 cms; *Indian Archaeology—A Review 1973–74*: 4–5).

[11] A subsequent publication suggests a somewhat different reading as "*Dhanakada vandana mago ca*" translated as "and the pathway to worship Dhanakada" (Roy 1994: 193).

interaction are noticeable in the archaeological record as: changes in burial practices; shifts in settlement pattern, such as at Kotalingala on the Godavari; and the presence of monastic structures.

It is also evident from archaeological excavations at sites such as that of Sannathi located on the eastern bank of the river Bhima 60 kilometers south of Gulbarga that the practice of erecting memorials for the deceased reappeared in a somewhat altered form in the early centuries CE. A chance discovery during renovation work in the Chandralamba temple at the site of Aśokan Rock Edicts XII and XIV and Pillar Edicts I and II clearly shifted its beginnings to the Mauryan period.[12] Distinctive finds from the site include memorial slabs with one of the complete specimens recovered measuring three meters in height. These slabs are divided into panels; the top panel is generally arched and decorated with a series of tiered roofs and windows. The second panel carries the portrait of an individual or couple, while the third commonly shows either an unyoked bullock cart or a horse without a rider (Howell 1995: 69).

Several of these freestanding greenish white limestone pillars were found at the site of Nagarjunakonda in the Krishna valley and are associated with the ruling dynasty of the Iksvakus.[13] They bear inscriptions honoring the kings and queens, chieftains and generals, religious personages, foreman of artisans,[14] and soldiers.

Perhaps the most interesting region for an examination of issues related to cultural transformation is the stretch extending from the Palghat gap and Coimbatore to the Kaveri delta. One site especially significant for this chapter is the site of Kodumanal on the northern bank of the river Noyyal, a tributary of the Kaveri excavated by Tamil University, Thanjavur. The site straddles the ancient route from the Palghat gap eastward to Karur and Uraiyur along the Kaveri, and dates from the late Megalithic to the Early Historical periods (c. third century BCE to the third century CE). In addition to the large number of megalithic monuments at the site, excavations have yielded evidence for a vigorous iron-smelting industry and the manufacture of jewelry from rock crystal and carnelian. The surviving settlement at the site revealed a cultural deposit of 1.5 to 2.5 meters with as many as eight floor levels (Rajan 1997; Subbarayalu 1999). In contrast to the use of stone for burials, no stone or brick was encountered in the habitation area, and houses continued to be made with mud walls. Nearly two hundred inscribed potsherds were found at the site in stratified contexts. These are mostly in Tamil written in the Tamil-Brahmi script, and a few in Prakrit in the Brahmi script. These have been dated through archaeo-magnetic tests to between 300 BCE and 200 CE (± 50) (Mahadevan 1996a; Mahadevan 2003). The finds of Tamil-Brahmi shards from sites along the Kaveri river and along the east coast from Salihundam in Andhra to Korkai in Tamilnadu and across the waters at Anuradhapura

[12] Remains of a brick fortification enclosing an area of 86 hectares and of a raised inner citadel are visible at the site, while at least two Buddhist *stūpas* have been identified outside the city walls.

[13] The earliest recorded evidence of a *chayya stambha* from Andhra is from Gangaperuru in Cuddapah district: *Epigraphia Indica* 36 (1970): 207.

[14] The foreman of artisans (*avesani*), Mulabhuta by name, hailed from a place called Pavayata. A narrow-necked vase, perhaps a guild mark, has been incised over the inscription: *Epigraphia Indica* 35 (1963–64): 16.

in Sri Lanka clearly places Kodumanal within a larger network.[15] But, although these sites shared a common language and script, they were by no means identical, as an examination of finds from Kodumanal and Arikamedu adequately illustrates.

Arikamedu, 4 kilometers south of Pondicherry, is perhaps one of the few historical sites that have been subjected to several seasons of archaeological excavations. Initially excavated for six seasons between 1941 and 1950 separately by J.-M. Casal and R.E.M. Wheeler, the site was excavated again between 1989 and 1992 by a joint University of Pennsylvania and Madras University team. These more recent excavations have added to our understanding of the site in several significant ways, the most important being in terms of chronology. Wheeler had suggested that the site had been abandoned with the decline of Roman trade in the second century CE, while more recent excavations have provided evidence for the continuation of the site well into the Cola period (Begley et al. 1996: 1). Wheeler had designated the site as an "Indo-Roman trading station" in 1946. It is now evident that Arikamedu was one of a series of early historic sites along the Tamil coast extending from Vasavasamudram to Korkai, but perhaps one of the longest surviving coastal settlement. The first-century CE Greek text, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, refers to the site as Poduke, and this name is said to derive from the Tamil term *puduceri* meaning a new settlement. It may be pertinent to highlight the antecedents of the site and the reasons for the setting up of the new settlement located on the right bank of the Ariyankuppam river just before it empties into the Bay of Bengal.

The megalithic antecedents of the region around Arikamedu have been explored and documented (Rajan 1997: 275–334). In fact Soutokeny (Suttukeni) is a rich megalithic site located upstream of the Gingee river and is contemporary to the earliest settlement at Arikamedu (Casal and Casal 1956: 30–38). This earliest occupation at Arikamedu was described as a fishing village by Casal after his excavations, and fishing continues to be a major occupation in the region. The archaeological record indicates that brick architecture and new ceramic forms were introduced into this megalithic settlement and the site was linked into a larger east coast network, as is evident from the finds of Rouletted Ware shards (Begley et al. 1996: 14).

Thus the settlement at Arikamedu grew along the river bank, and the impetus for its growth was provided by trade rather than its association with the political elite, with fish being one of the traded items along with pepper and paddy.[16] Wheeler

[15] Tamil-Brahmi shards are dated on the basis of palaeography and stratigraphy to between the third through the second centuries BCE and fourth century CE. Salihundam in Srikakulam district is the northernmost site along the east coast, which has yielded 69 inscribed shards with inscriptions in Prakrit, the sole exception being a Rouletted Ware fragment with a Tamil inscription reading *nakuldn*, a masculine personal name. Other coastal sites where Tamil-Brahmi shards have been found include Vaddamanu, Amaravati, Kanchipuram, Arikamedu, Vallam, Alagankulam, and Korkai. A second area of distribution is along the Kaveri river, as well as scattered finds across the sea in Sri Lanka and at Quseir al-Qadim and Berenike on the Red Sea coast of Egypt (Mahadevan 1996b: 287–315).

[16] One of the few literary sources that provide graphic accounts of fishing and sailing communities is early Tamil poetry. Fishing is described as one of the major activities of the settlement at Muciri or Muziris. The fishermen are described as

considered brick-lined structures identified as tanks as distinguishing features of the southern sector at Arikamedu and proposed that they formed a part of the textile dyeing complex. But as there is no evidence of paved floors or drainage outlets, recent excavations have ruled out their use for dyeing (Begley et al. 1996: 19). Construction at the site was in kiln-fired brick with evidence for use of terracotta tiles, but generally was of poor quality and on unstable foundations. It is significant that ceramic analysis suggests socioeconomic or cultural differences between the inhabitants of the northern and southern sectors at the site (Begley et al. 1996: 111).

The inscribed shards from Arikamedu number sixty-six and hence are far fewer than those found at Kodumanal, but in contrast to Kodumanal a range of imported ceramics have been discovered at the site. These include amphorae fragments and shards of terra sigillata. However, as compared to the near absence of Roman coins at Arikamedu, finds of Roman coin hoards are a distinctive feature of the Coimbatore region, and twenty-six finds have been reported so far. Out of 3,467 coins, seventy-seven were of gold and 3,390 of silver, with issues of Augustus and Tiberius dominating the collection (Rajan 1997: 28). Another apparent difference in the character of the two sites lies in the nature of structures found. At Kodumanal these continued to be of mud, while kiln-fired brick and roof tiles are in evidence at Arikamedu. Thus the divergent nature of the two sites is evident, and also apparent is the difference in the wider network in which they participated. While Kodumanal was a part of the regional trading network extending inland along the river Kaveri and along the coast to the island of Sri Lanka, Arikamedu formed a part of a much wider network. This network extended all along the east coast from lower Bengal to northern Sri Lanka, and also incorporated sites across the Indian Ocean from Berenike on the Red Sea coast to Sembiran on the coast of Bali.

To recapitulate, around the third–second centuries BCE, urban centers in the western Deccan evolved from exchange and market centers, largely as a result of the expansion of trade. In Andhra, on the other hand, urban centers were in most cases associated with localized chieftains and rajas as a result of the growing power of the megalithic communities supplemented with trading activities. Further south, there is a clear distinction in settlements along the coast in contrast with those located inland. The pace of change and inputs from the trading communities is evident in references to the *nigama* and the *gosthi*. In both the western and eastern Deccan changes in the nature of settlement are associated with increased religious activity, as indicated by the construction of Buddhist monastic centers along trade routes and along the coasts. This was not the case further south, where there is evidence for the presence of Jainism in the region around Madurai in the archaeological record. The early Tamil sources, however, describe a diverse religious landscape with the presence of brahmins, the performance of sacrifices, and the reverence of the hero who led the communities in battle.

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harvesting the salt on the shore (*Akananuru* 280) and collecting at the harbor "where they take fat pearls from the spreading waves and divide them on the broad shore" (*Akananuru* 280). Fishermen inhabit the outer streets of the town (*Pattinappalai* 77).

THE WRITTEN WORD AND INFORMATION TRANSFER

These diverse communities in peninsular South Asia used at least four languages, namely, Prakrit, Tamil, Old Sinhala, and Sanskrit, which were all written in the Brahmi script, with some evidence for the presence of Kharosthi as well. Starting with the occurrence of graffiti in Megalithic levels, the script was used on pottery, conch shells, metal sheets, relic caskets, images, crystal, and of course the better-known records on stone and copper plates. Lal (1960) studied sixty-one symbols and concluded that forty-seven of these were common to first-millennium BCE Iron Age megalithic pottery on the one hand, and Harappan and post-Harappan cultures on the other.[17] Since then there have been additional data on the occurrence of graffiti in the megalithic context and its continuation in the historical period. Based on a study of the archaeological data from Gujarat, Possehl has argued for transformation and change in the Harappan script in the post-1900 BCE period and its survivals in the first-millennium BCE Iron Age graffiti.[18]

After a detailed discussion of more recent finds, Mahadevan has shown that though a majority of megalithic symbols occur singly on pots, there is also evidence of two or three symbols in a row or five and eight symbols in contemporary cave paintings. But more significantly, the evidence from inscribed pottery from Kodumanal and Uraiyur in the Kaveri basin indicates that between the third century BCE and third century CE, megalithic graffiti coexisted with Tamil-Brahmi (Mahadevan 1995: 6). It is suggested that the graffiti may indicate family or clan symbols, while some may have religious significance.

It is important that the Brahmi script was adopted for inscribing names in more than one language on pottery in peninsular India, namely, Tamil, Prakrit, Sanskrit, and Old Sinhala. This clearly indicates the presence of at least three language groups involved in trading activity in peninsular India—those using Tamil, Prakrit/Sanskrit, and Sinhala, with several overlaps between these networks. This complexity is further enhanced by finds of shards with Brahmi inscriptions in the fifth–fourth centuries BCE levels at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka.

Archaeologically, the island was colonized in the Mesolithic period,[19] and the evidence suggests a change from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age, with no intervening Copper-Bronze Age. This change to the Iron Age is dated between 900 and 600 BCE

[17] More recently the issue of the survival of the Indus script has been reviewed by Possehl (1996: chapter 4).

[18] The distinctive Indus stamp seals, both square and oblong, are no longer made, and writing virtually disappears or is much reduced from sites in Sindh and the Indus valley. However, there is an abundance of graffiti from late Harappan sites in Saurashtra and Gujarat, and graffiti continue at first-millennium BCE Iron Age sites in peninsular India. Several characters are common between the Harappan script and the Iron Age graffiti (Possehl 1999: 26).

[19] Two dates available for the Mesolithic at Anuradhapura are around 3900 BCE (Deraniyagala 1990: 740). Evidence for this phase comes from a low mound on the left bank of the Malwattu Oya occupied by microlithic tool-using hunter-gatherers.

and is marked by paddy cultivation and the presence of domestic cattle.[20] The earliest known protohistoric settlement at Anuradhapura extended over ten hectares by 800 BCE (Deraniyagala 1990: 260). At Anuradhapura (ASW2), this phase is marked by black and red burnished ceramics, iron slag, and iron objects. A small number of shards bearing graffiti generally termed megalithic are known from this period. The graffiti take the form of characters incised with a sharp instrument on the pot after firing. The second period is dated between 510 and 340 BCE and indicates a more permanent occupation of the site. A pit burial from this period yielded four shards bearing portions of Brahmi inscriptions, though no skeletal remains were found associated with it (Coningham et al. 1996: 81).[21]

Archaeological excavations in the citadel area at Anuradhapura have provided evidence for a change in the nature of the structures between 360 and 190 BCE. It was at this time that a rampart and ditch were constructed around the settlement. The faunal record showed a high proportion of seashells, and material finds included several imports from India, such as a fine grey ware, carnelian, and lapis lazuli. Coins were in evidence for the first time. Another five shards with portions of Brahmi inscriptions were also recovered. Of interest is the clay sealing from Anuradhapura (pit in period H) with the legend: "Magaha, the Purumaka, son of Tissa." The same name appears in the Mihintale cave inscription dedicated to the Buddhist Sangha and dated to the third century BCE.

The finds of shards inscribed with Brahmi letters from Anuradhapura in Iron Age levels have raised several questions. A majority of the shards are of coarse and medium black and red ware of local manufacture, and the inscriptions are post-firing. The inscriptions comprising either letters or names are often described as being in Prakrit (e.g. in Conningham and Allchin 1995), but this issue needs to be reexamined in view of a different perspective presented by Mahadevan (1996a). Mahadevan argues for Sinhala-Prakrit (Old Sinhalese) as the language of the inscribed shards, including one

20 The twenty-two known megalithic sites in Sri Lanka straddle the Iron Age and Early Historic settlements. They vary greatly in appearance from extended burials and pit burials to cairn circles or cist burials (Coningham and Allchin 1995: 170).

21 Dr. Siran Deraniyagala (Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of Sri Lanka) excavated in 1990 at Anuradhapura, providing the first indications of a pre-Mauryan date for the presence of Brahmi in Sri Lanka, thereby challenging the hitherto held views on the introduction of the script to the island in the Mauryan period. The five shards came from a 10m deep test pit, Anuradhapura Mahapali (AMP). In order to test the early dates, a Sri Lankan-British team begun excavating in 1989 at a locality within the ancient city some 300m to the northwest of AMP. The new trench (ASW2) was excavated over three seasons, and 118 stratigraphic phases and 11 structural periods carefully recorded. A total of 29 radiocarbon determinations were available, and the radiocarbon laboratories of the British Museum and Beta Analytic carried out the measurements. It is clear from these detailed analyses that the earliest evidence of Brahmi script at ASW2 (in Phase J4) can be dated to the early part of the fourth century BCE (Coningham et al. 1996: 77).

shard from Kodumanal. After the early centuries CE, the inscribed shards decline in frequency.[22]

The finds of inscribed shards at Anuradhapura in well-dated sequence has led the excavators to suggest mercantile involvement in the rise of the Brahmi script or at least in its introduction into Sri Lanka (Coningham et al. 1996: 73–97). An analysis of the inscribed shards from Anuradhapura indicates that the legends were inscribed on lids and on ceramic vessels and that many of these vessels may have been dedicated to religious establishments. During excavations of the northern and southern *ayakas* of the main *stūpa* at Jetavana at Anuradhapura, seventeen vessels were found containing conch shells, ivories, over two thousand beads, hundreds of fragments of semi-precious stones, and so on (Coningham et al. 1996: 90). Thus the close association of mercantile activity with travels by Buddhist clergy is evident.

Nearly two hundred inscribed potsherds were found at the site of Kodumanal in Coimbatore district in stratified contexts. These are mostly in Tamil written in the Tamil-Brahmi script and a few in Prakrit in the Brahmi script. These have been dated through archaeo-magnetic tests to between 300 BCE and 200 CE (± 50) (Mahadevan 1996a: 59). The inscriptions on the pots include Tamil names such as Kannan Atan, Pannan, Antavan Atan, etc., as also Sanskrit names like Varuni. One burial (megalith II) yielded a shard with the name Visaki. Another significant discovery was the presence of the term *nikama* (Rajan 1996: 79). Mahadevan argues for Sinhala-Prakrit (Old Sinhalese) as the language of one shard from Kodumanal.[23] Another interesting parallel is to be found in the use of the Old Sinhalese *samuda* (Sanskrit *samudra* and Prakrit *samudda*) as a personal name in the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka (Paranavitana 1970: nos. 69, 774, 1096, 1005 and 1010). The term also occurs as *samuda*, *samudamnika*, *samuda-siri* in the records at Nagarjunakonda (*Epigraphia Indica* 35 [1963–64]: 34–35).

At least seventeen of the sixty-six inscriptions on pottery from Arikamedu are known to be in Tamil. A majority of the inscribed shards date to the first through the second centuries CE, though the earliest find at the site was from the Megalithic levels dated to the third century BCE. These consist largely of masculine personal names with one exception, which reads *ēkuttai* and has been identified as Prakrit Gutt or Guta of the Sri Lanka cave inscriptions. Another term that has wider prevalence is Kuyiran (Tamil) or Kubira (Old Sinhala), both derived from Sanskrit Kubera. Variants appear as Kupiro at Bharhut in central India, Kubirako from Bhattiprolu in Andhra, Kubira in Sri Lanka cave inscriptions, and Kuviran in early Tamil cave inscriptions (Mahadevan 1996b: 295–296).

Another 214 inscribed shards were recovered from the archaeological excavations at Vaddamanu, located ten kilometers southeast of Amaravati. The largest

22 After the early centuries CE the decline in inscribed shards corresponds to the increasing use of palm-leaf manuscripts. Ivory manuscript covers are attested to in the excavations at Anuradhapura (Coningham and Allchin 1995: 178).

23 Mahadevan's study (1996a) has not taken the Anuradhapura material into account, but is based on nine shards from coastal centers in India dated between second century BCE and the first century CE. Other sites include Arikamedu (2 shards) and Alagankulam (2 shards).

concentration of 109 shards was in Period II, dated between 100 BCE and CE 200, though the overall chronological span ranges from 200 BCE to the fourth century CE (Sastri et al. 1992: 116–140). The monastic complex at Salihundam or ancient Kattaharama yielded eighty inscribed shards, and the few complete readings from the site would suggest that these were on platters or pots donated to the monastery (Subrahmanyam 1964: 119–122).

Thus several language groups used the Brahmi script, though there are regional variations, and the fact that it had wide currency across most parts of the subcontinent around the third to the second centuries BCE is an indication of the extended linkages of the groups using it. Inscriptions on pottery have an extensive distribution in the early historic period, and inscribed pottery fragments are found both at nonmonastic and Buddhist monastic sites. Pots were used for transporting commodities, and hence the extensive distribution of inscribed shards. Particularly noteworthy in the monastic context are the inscribed bowls and vessels carrying dedicative inscriptions (Ray 1987: 2–3). Overall, the ceramics which bear inscriptions are varied and include black-and-red ware, all-black ware, Russet coated painted ware, Rouletted ware, and so on. Of these, fragments with legible inscriptions are few, and these in a majority of cases contain names.

These inscribed shards are in addition to the large numbers of seals and sealings found at archaeological sites in the Indian subcontinent (Thaplyal 1972). Seals were used for marking merchandise (*Arthaśāstra* II.21.2–3); they were stamped on wet clay laid over fastenings on the mouths of pots containing valuables (*Khadirangara Jataka*, no. 40). They were also used for securing documents and for identification. An early Buddhist text, the *Milindapanha*, refers to the custodian of seals. These seals occur in a variety of materials such as stone, ivory, copper, and the ubiquitous terracotta at a range of archaeological sites. Particularly relevant to our discussion are the carnelian seals and intaglios with inscriptions found at sites in Sri Lanka and at least at four major coastal centers in Southeast Asia, namely, Khuan Lukpad, Kuala Selinsing, Chaiya, and Oc-Eo. The earliest specimen of carnelian seals with Brahmi legends from Khuan Lukpad dates to the first century CE, though these continued in use until the sixth through the seventh centuries CE, as indicated by later finds (Ray 1994: chapter 4).

This corpus is supplemented by finds of seals with legends in Kharosthi, e.g. a seal from U Thong now displayed in the Lopburi Museum. Kharosthi characters have also been identified on a seal matrix of tin from Oc-Eo, while the male head on another tin seal resembles the head of Kushana ruler Miaos on his coins (Mukherjee 1990: 3).

A symbol widely distributed in the Indian Ocean region is the ship symbol, which occurs around the first–second centuries CE on punch-marked, cast copper and Satavahana coins, terracotta sealings, and as graffiti from deltaic Bengal and the Andhra coast (Ray 1994: 52). Other examples of the use of the ship symbol on pottery and coins are known from Sri Lanka[24] and south Thailand. A stone seal from Nakhorn Pathom depicts a two-masted ship identified as a Southeast Asian vessel with

[24] The scratched depiction of a sailing vessel with a single mast with rigging and twin rudder oars is to be found on potsherds from Tissamaharama, Anuradhapura, and the Brahmi inscription of Duvegala (Weisshaar 2001: 15–16).

outrigger (Lyons 1979: 355).

Another potsherd with a ship graffito was recovered during the recent excavations at Berenike on the Red Sea in a securely dated deposit of the second half of the first century CE. Though the representation has been identified as a characteristic craft of the Mediterranean, a survey of the Red Sea coast in the vicinity of Berenike has provided no evidence for harbor installations, much less for any structures similar to those known from Ptolemaic and Roman harbors elsewhere in the Mediterranean (Sidebotham and Wendrich 1996: 441).

Other indicators of the widespread use of writing survive in the archaeological record in the form of instruments of writing and ink-pots. Styli and points of bone, ivory, stone, and metals are found extensively at archaeological sites in the subcontinent and were in all probability used for a variety of purposes such as inscribing, engraving, as needles, antimony rods, and for weaving. In the absence of information on the context and the shape of the stylus, it is difficult to determine the precise function. At Sonkh near Mathura, for example, 203 styli form the single largest category of objects made of bone and include both single- and double-pointed varieties dated to the early centuries of the Christian era (Haertel 1993: 277). Ink is known to have been used, and several ink-pots of clay have been found at archaeological sites dated between the first and sixth centuries CE (Ghosh 1989: 359).

These widespread archaeological data may be contrasted with the find-spots of stone inscriptions in the Deccan, the earliest of these dating to the Mauryan period. As compared to the diversity of the records in the north, a majority of the Aśokan inscriptions from the peninsula are the minor rock edicts. Their homogeneity is particularly noticeable in the cluster in Karnataka, though there are exceptions elsewhere in the Deccan. Portions of the major rock edicts have been found at Sopara (VIII, IX), Sannathi (XII, XIV on face A and Separate Edicts I and II on Face B) and Erragudi (I–XIV), while a fragment of a minor pillar edict somewhat debatable is known from Amaravati (Allchin and Norman 1985). The association of these inscriptions with Megalithic sites on the one hand and Buddhist shrines on the other is striking.[25] The inscriptions or the *dhammalipi* of the ruler are in themselves unique in the history of South Asia and are not replicated by subsequent kings. The post-Mauryan period in peninsular India marks a shift in the relationship between the king, religious centers, and the groups that patronized these as indicated by the placement and contents of the inscriptions.

[25] Brahmagiri is best known for three copies of minor rock edicts preserved on the upper surface at the bottom of the granite outcrop. About 200 meters to the southeast and further up the hillside there are remnants of an apsidal brick *caitya* excavated in 1942 and again in 1947 (Wheeler 1947–48: 186–187). There is no evidence to date the caitya per se, though the brick sizes are similar to those from Dharanikota. A comparison with similar structures from the north is revealing. For example, at Sarnath, a brick apsidal *caitya* was recorded in the excavations not far from the Aśokan pillar (Allchin 1995: 244, figure 11.15). Two more are known from Marshall's excavations at Sanchi (temples 18 and 40) and these were dated by him to the Mauryan period (Marshall 1936: 112–122). This evidence, together with the data for early Buddhist presence in Andhra, raises the question of agency of the Buddhist clergy in reading and interpreting the Aśokan edicts for the benefit of the local populace.

There is a marked change in the distribution pattern of the stone inscription in peninsular India, with the epigraphs located within Buddhist monastic establishments rather than in their vicinity. Instead of providing communication between the king and the populace, the inscriptions record donations to religious centers made by diverse groups. Clearly the shift is from local and individual entrepreneurs to kin-based trading groups using a common language and with more than casual links with religious institutions. Within the scope of this chapter, the attempt is to trace the increasing complexity and linkages of only one of these language groups, namely, the Prakrit/ Sanskrit-using group and their interaction with Buddhist monastic centers.

PATTERNS OF PATRONAGE AND EMERGING IDENTITIES

Starting from modest beginnings in the form of apsidal *caityas* dated to the Mauryan period, more than a thousand Buddhist caves were excavated in the hills of the Western Ghats and its offshoots at about fifty centers in the western Deccan. Broadly, these sites are located at passes along overland routes or overlooking the creeks and coastal settlements. Of these, nineteen centers are significant in terms of providing inscriptional data and have yielded a total of more than two hundred inscriptions (Nagaraju 1981: 5). As compared to this exuberance of rock-cut architecture, a majority of the monastic complexes in the Andhra region are structural and are concentrated along the coast with a scatter along the inland route in the Telengana area. Nearly 140 sites are listed in the region, and the distribution along the coast from Srikakulam in the north to Ramatirtham and Nandalur in the south is quite striking (Hanumantha Rao, et al. 1998: figure 1). Of these, thirty sites have yielded stone inscriptions.

These stupendous Buddhist monuments may be contrasted with the modest dimensions of some of the other religious architecture. Brick was the medium of construction in most of the early Śaiva temples, as was the case at Gudimallam (*Indian Archaeology—A Review* 1973–74, pp.1–2), Kudavelli and Veerapuram dated between the second–first centuries BCE and third–fourth centuries CE (Sarma 1982: 40–42). In contrast, at Nagarjunakonda stone seems to have been used along with brick, and the walls of many of the temples were made of brick with a stone veneer (Soundara Rajan 1965: 4). Finally, stone seems to have become the chief material for constructing temples around the fourth–sixth centuries CE and at Keesaragutta, for example, one of the temples is built only of stone slabs (Sastri 1989–90: 28). Further south, the rock-cut caverns of Jaina monks with stone beds are the sole indicators of religious architecture in Madurai district. A majority of the inscriptions are found at Buddhist sites and are an important source for understanding patterns of patronage, but more significantly the extended family ties of these groups.

Inscriptions from the early Buddhist sites are generally short and record gifts made to the monastic establishments by a variety of groups and individual donors. These have been studied through a range of themes related to early Buddhism, such as transference of merit, presence of *stūpas* raised for deceased local monks, donation of the Buddha images, monks and nuns as participants in relic cults, collective patronage of the Karle *caitya*, and so on (Dehejia 1992; Schopen 1997). The objective in this section is somewhat different, and the attempt is to outline representations of trading

groups and their kinship ties that may be evident in the epigraphic record. Inscriptions from two of the Buddhist sites, located at opposite coasts of the Deccan, namely, Kanheri in the Ulhas basin on the west coast and Amaravati in the lower Krishna valley in Andhra, have been tabulated (tables 5.1 and 5.2), and this discussion presents a summary of the results. As is evident from an analysis of the inscriptions, Amaravati and Kanheri provide the largest number of records in their respective regions, though unlike Amaravati, there is no evidence for royal patronage at Kanheri.

Nearly fifty-one legible inscriptions and twenty-six epigraphs are recorded in the more than one hundred caves at Kanheri on the west coast, including three Pahlavi epigraphs in cave 90. In contrast to Sanchi, where 200 of the 631 inscriptions record donations by monks and nuns, at Kanheri, the single largest group of donors (as mentioned in nineteen inscriptions) comprises *negamas* (merchants), *vanija* (trader), *suvanakokara* (goldsmith), and *heranika* (treasurer). Thirteen gifts by women and ten by monks and nuns follow this in second place. Merchants travel to the monastic site from other settlements along the west coast, such as Kalyan, Sopara, and Chaul and refer to their donations as *deyadhamma* or obligatory donation made for the welfare of their families. It is significant that these donations are made in association with other members of the family, and at least two refer to affiliation with the Sangha and a *thera*.

Gifts of money and land are other striking features of the donations at Kanheri, and this leads to the issue of the resources available at the site, which included both trading activity (coastal, inland as well as oceanic) and agricultural practice. Most of the caves at Kanheri are located in small clusters between sixty and ninety meters above the surrounding plain, and ancient inscriptions provide the name of the site as Kanhasela (Nagaraju 1981: 190). At least ten of the inscriptions record donations of cisterns, tanks, and water bodies. Almost every cell contained a *podhi* where rainwater from the top of the hill was collected. A second-century inscription on a detached rock opposite indicates a more complex arrangement at cave 41 at Kanheri, which refers to the construction of a tank by *setthi* Punaka. The stone slab measures 1.10 x 1.25 meters and is located close to an ancient stone wall across a rainwater stream emerging from the nearby catchment area at the foot of the hill. In the broken wall a conduit excavated in the rock and measuring 1.7 x 1.75 x 1 meter has been located. This perhaps provides the earliest evidence for the damming of water and construction of a tank. What was the water to be used for? Several inscriptions at the site refer to the fields around Kanheri, which were under cultivation for the maintenance of Buddhist monks (Gokhale 1991: 84–86; Ray 1986). Clearly, then, the lay following at Kanheri was rich and prosperous, and this accounted for the development and continued prosperity of the monastic site.

Another long-lasting monastic center was that of Amaravati (termed Dhanyakataka in early epigraphs) in the lower Krishna valley, though it presented a contrast in terms of its art and architecture as well as pattern of patronage to its rock-cut contemporary on the west coast. Of the two hundred inscriptions recovered from the site, 108 provide relevant data and forty-two of these record donations by women. Monks and nuns (twenty-four) form the single largest category of donors, followed by *gahapatis* and their wives (twenty-two), with trading groups and their relatives accounting for fifteen donations. Neither money donations nor gifts of cisterns and tanks figure in the list and instead the emphasis is on gifts of pillars and sculpted slabs.

The antecedents of Kanheri and Amaravati may be compared to help explain their somewhat divergent patterns of patronage, though both started as shrines rather than as residences for monks and nuns, and both were located within larger trade networks, as discussed earlier.[26] The earliest excavation at Kanheri was a flat-roofed rectangular *caitya*, with a *stūpa* placed close to the back wall (cave 2e). Nagaraju (1981: 191) dates this cave to the latter half of the third century BCE. The next stage of work is evident in the main *caitya* (cave 3) dated to the beginning of the first century BCE, which was subsequently completed around the first quarter of the second century CE. The available evidence indicates that Kanheri gained patronage from the second century CE onward and water cisterns date from this period, as also the dwelling units for monks (Nagaraju 1981: 218).

Unlike Kanheri, Amaravati was located in a region known for its earlier Megalithic settlements, and situated at a distance of a kilometer from it was the urban center of Dharanikota. The earliest levels at both sites date to the fourth through the third centuries BCE and have yielded megalithic cultural material. It would seem that the urban center and the monastic site developed independently. Archaeological excavations conducted at Dharanikota have provided evidence for five periods of occupation from the fourth through the third centuries BCE to the eleventh century CE (*Indian Archaeology—A Review 1973–74*: 4–5), while Amaravati continued well into the fourteenth century.

A stele that was discovered at the *stūpa* site of Amaravati is significant for this discussion, as it graphically depicts the creation and legitimization of sacred spots in an area as far removed from the Buddha's peregrinations as the southeast coast. The three extant faces of the stele depict scenes relating to the last three months of the life of the Buddha and also provide explanatory labels. The label on the first face mentions the Bahuputa-caitya and other *caityas* at Vaisali, while on the second face the legend Savathi or Sravasti occurs on one of the three *stūpa*-like structures. Another sacred site represented is that of Jetavana. It is significant that these depictions match in detail accounts of the life of the Buddha as narrated in the *Digha Nikaya* (*Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, 5.8; Ghosh and Sarkar 1964–65). This stele thus provided justification for the association of the site of Amaravati with sacred spots in the north such as Vaisali and Sravasti, and perhaps also explains the prominent part played by monks and nuns in sponsoring religious architecture at the site. An early pillar inscription from Amaravati refers to a donation by a *bhikhu* from Pataliputra (*Epigraphia Indica* 15 (1919–1920): 258–275). Thus the prominent role of monks and nuns in the emerging religious sanctity of Amaravati is evident and may be contrasted with Kanheri, which developed in close proximity to the market centers of Kalyan and Sopara. Kanheri neither had an earlier megalithic habitation nor could it boast of association with the Buddha legend. Nevertheless the lay community of the west coast richly endowed it.

[26] Interesting parallels may be drawn with present practice in Sri Lanka. Most Sinhalese villages have a local temple with a resident monk—in fact, the temple begins when a monk establishes his residence or *avasa*. An *avasa* is transformed into a *vihara* by the addition of objects of worship such as the Buddha image, a *stūpa*, and a Bo tree. Traditionally the function of the monk is to teach and to preach (Gombrich 1997: 146–147).

How does one explain the large number of donations by women at Amaravati? They identify themselves as wives, sisters, mothers, or layworshipers and nuns, and make donations with brothers, sons, sisters, and daughters. The issue has largely been discussed either in the context of nuns (Schopen 1997: chapter 11)[27] or with reference to female roles as laywomen, donors, and goddesses in early Buddhism (Skilling, 2001). The micro-study of two sites presented above indicates variations in the general model and the need to relate these to rigorous studies of kinship patterns of the local and regional communities. Trautmann (1981) made a beginning in his study of Dravidian kinship and political systems, but this is a theme that requires further research, particularly with reference to the status and position of women in peninsular India.[28]

THE CHANGING RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Sharma's study on feudalism based on an analysis of inscriptions has been influential in shaping the parameters of historical debate relating to the post-third- to fourth-century period (Sharma 1965). This has generally revolved around trade with the Roman Empire, which led to the development of urban centers in the early centuries of the Christian era, but with the decline of the Roman Empire, and consequently of its trade with India, these towns and cities were abandoned. This was followed by a period of agrarian expansion and of the self-sufficient village economy until 1000 CE, when foreign trade revived under the Arabs. The decline of trade resulted in a consequent decline of Buddhist monasteries, emergence of the land-grant economy with a dominant role for the brahmins in agrarian expansion, and acculturation of tribal groups in peripheral regions (Sharma 1987).[29]

This debate does not address shifts in transoceanic trade routes or the increasing importance of Sri Lanka in the maritime network, nor does religion or the use of writing for trading purposes play any part in it (Ray 2003: chapter 8). For example, finds of late Roman copper coins dating from second half of the third through the sixth century CE bearing mintmarks of Antioch from sites in Andhra, Tamilnadu, and

[27] "From the very earliest period up to and through the Kusana period, nuns are everywhere—apart from the Kharosthi area and Nagarjunikonda—present as active donors in numbers similar to monks. When we move from the Kushana to the Gupta period (the fourth to fifth centuries CE), this pattern changes radically" (Schopen 1997: 250).

[28] More so since it is often suggested that early Buddhism failed to alter the position of women in a predominantly patriarchal society (Chakravarti 1987: 31–35).

[29] The opposing trend emphasises the centrality of the political structure in initiating change and suggests three discontinuous phases of urbanization around which other economic activities coalesced. These phases have been defined as the Harappan (third–second millennium BCE), Early Historic (600 BCE to third–fourth centuries CE) and Early Medieval (the sixth–seventh to the twelfth through the thirteenth) (Chattopadhyaya 1994: 167). Both Sharma and Chattopadhyaya, however, accept trade as a state-sponsored discontinuous activity—a position very different from that adopted in this chapter.

Karnataka as well as from Sri Lanka in the thousands indicate continuing maritime connections (Walburg 1991). These are matched by finds of amphorae fragments dated between the first and sixth centuries CE from the island of Elephanta near Kanheri (Shinde et al. 2002) and can be multiplied with reference to other examples.

These shifts coincide with changes in the nature and location of epigraphs as well as in the religious landscape. We have already mentioned that inscriptions were no longer engraved within Buddhist monastic complexes, but from the fourth century onward are increasingly inscribed on copper plates, indicating both a change in the nature of recording the affiliation to religious institutions and a transformation of the social base. At the same time, these inscriptions reflect political consolidation and increasing complexity of the administrative structure as compared to those of the earlier period. For example, the Vilavetti copper plates of the Pallava king Simhavarman of the fifth century refer to taxes payable by metalworkers, leather-workers, weavers, shop keepers, artisans, water-diviners, and so on (Mahalingam 1988 no. 15: 78–81), though the specific amounts are not mentioned. This is further matched by an enlargement in the number of terms used for habitation types, indicating increasing hierarchy in settlement pattern, though the *nigama* seldom occurs. Thus while *gama* or village occurs in almost every one of the sixteen Visnukundin records, five contain references to military camps, nine to *pura*, two to *nagara*, three to *vatika*, and seven to *visaya* (Babu 1993: 127).

Nor is there any general abandonment of Buddhist sites, as is evident by the longevity of centers such as Kanheri and Amaravati and the excavations of several new caves and donations of images in the western Deccan. Nineteen new caves were added at Kanheri, and Buddhist images sculpted on the walls of the monastic establishment in the fifth-sixth centuries CE under the rule of the Traikutakas (Leese 1983: 14). The earlier practice of engraving inscriptions on the sidewalls was continued, though there are references to far fewer donors at the site. In the fifth century, a resident of a village in Sindhu country, located perhaps in what is now Pakistan, paid for the construction of a *caitya* at the site (Gokhale 1991: 17).

Ajanta is another site that provides evidence for both continuity and change. Though the beginnings at the site date to the second through the first centuries BCE, the fifth-century *viharas* indicate major shifts both in the conception and organization of space. Similarly, the inscriptions indicate a change in the position of the Buddha, who is now perceived as head of the monastery (Owen 2001: 27–28).

We have earlier referred to the modest beginnings of the temple in Andhra around the second through the first centuries BCE. Certainly the data from Nagarjunakonda indicate increasing elaboration and expansion in the social base of the temple, coinciding with marked transformations in the nature of the Buddhist monastic establishments. Modifications in ritual and ceremony meant alterations in consumption patterns and changing patterns of trade. Another change was in the use of language, such as Sanskrit mixed with Prakrit from the third through the fourth centuries onward (e.g., Mattepad, district Guntur copper plates of Damodaravarman).

There was a corresponding increase in the resource base, as evident from grants of land and villages to monastic establishments. Thus the Patagandigudem copper plates of the Iksvaku ruler Siri Ehavala Cantamula record the grant of thirty-two *nivartanas* of ploughable land (*halaksetra*) inhabited by the kin of the chief monk and sixty-four

nivartanas of land west of Pithunda to the monks (*bhikkhubhoga*), and these examples may be multiplied (Rao 1998: 191–219). The nature of donations now included lamps, bullock carts, servants (*dasi-dasa*), brass cauldrons, tanks, and money (e.g., Alluru grant, *Epigraphia Indica* 39 [1971]: 9–10). This was in addition to gifts of items of ritual use such as *dipa-dhupa-gandha-puspa-dhvaja-pana-bhojana-sayana-asana-glana-bhaisajya*: lamps, incense, sandalwood, flowers, flags, drinks, food, beds, seats, and medicines for the sick (Tummalagudem copper plates of the Visnukundins, Rao 1998: 197–202). The Caitanyapuri inscription engraved on a boulder records gifts of residential cells for use of persons in charge of incense and clothes attached to the Govindaraja *vihara* (Rao 1998: 196–197). Thus the ritual requirements of the monastic complexes required not only a wider range of donations but also manpower to monitor and maintain these, and though trading communities are no longer mentioned, yet the continuation of trade to supply the ritual needs of the religious establishments is beyond doubt.

In conclusion, the attempt in this chapter has been to highlight the vibrancy and dynamism of the early trade networks in peninsular India within the larger context of Indian Ocean maritime networks between the fourth century BCE and fourth century CE. I deliberately avoided the use of the term "between the empires" and refer instead to temporal markers, because by its very nature trade moves across political boundaries. Also, as I have argued, the archaeological data indicate that the empires neither control trade nor is it solely geared toward providing prestige items to the political elite. The commodities involved in this period included both materials such as spices, incense, aromatics, etc., that required very little working, yet had to be procured through diverse groups of forest communities and transported to cities and towns as well as items such as cloth, beads, and metal that required interaction with groups of artisans and workers.

The study of trading activity thus allows us to unravel a wide range of social relations between groups as varied as the *atavikas* (forest dwellers) at one end of the scale and *sreni-pramukhas* (chiefs of guilds) at the other. Some of these operated at local and regional levels, while others moved on a pan-Indian and transoceanic plane. Also certain commodities, such as cloth for instance, were both functional items when traded as coarse cloth and objects of veneration and gift-giving when reworked as fine silks or embroidered offerings. This association of expensive and fine textiles with elite status is evident in descriptions of the *nagaraka* or urban elite in Sanskrit literature. Many of the groups involved in trade networks, such as craftsmen, metal workers, transporters, mariners, etc., are seldom represented in literary sources and when present are provided an ambiguous status. The archaeological record, however, allows us an insight into the workings of some of these groups.

Conventional studies have tended to categorize maritime trade in the Indian Ocean in the precolonial period into national networks, such as Roman trade, Arab trade, and European trade in the western Indian Ocean, as well as Indian trade across the Bay of Bengal. The basis for these identities was inevitably the nature of the sources available. For example, the first-century CE text, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, written in Greek, provides the most comprehensive account of trade and trading commodities between the Red Sea and the west coast of India. The text itself nowhere refers to Roman trade, though it does mention a range of communities involved, including the

Greeks, Arabs, Indians, and the Ichthyophagoi, or coastal fishing communities. Nevertheless, in popular parlance references to Roman trade supplying the markets of the empire with luxury items such as Indian muslin continue. Similarly, the spread of Islam to India and Southeast Asia is often associated with the stimulus provided by the demand for spices.

From the archaeological record it is evident that the beginnings of the maritime system may be traced to the exploitation of marine resources in the prehistoric period, when fishing and sailing communities settled in coastal areas. By the third millennium BCE, these early beginnings had evolved into trade networks between the Makran and Gujarat coasts of the subcontinent and the Persian Gulf. Around the beginning of the Common Era, this network had expanded to include large parts of the western Indian Ocean. A range of communities participated in this, such as the Nabataeans, Sabaeans, Homerites, and Arabs, in addition to Indians.

Muza at the mouth of the Red Sea is described in the *Periplus Maris Erythreai* as a port of trade without a harbor (section 24) but with a good roadstead for mooring, and teeming with Arabs—ship owners or charterers and sailors (section 21). Leuko Kome on the Red Sea coast was the harbor of the Nabataeans where craft, "none large", loaded with freight from Arabia (section 19). Trade in cloth, wood, and agricultural products sustained the Indian Ocean network, as is indicated by the presence of guilds of weavers, potters, oil millers, and so on, in the list of donors mentioned in the inscriptions from the Buddhist monuments of peninsular India (Ray 1986: 112). This is further substantiated by the botanical evidence from the archaeological excavations at Berenike on the Red Sea coast, which included imports from South Asia in the fourth to sixth centuries CE, such as pepper, coconut, Job's tear, and possibly rice (Sidebotham and Wendrich 1996: 447; Cappers 1999).

Maritime voyages in the early centuries of the Common Era were regarded as profitable ventures, and Buddhist literature describes a variety of social groups who were involved (*Jatakas*, Book I, no. 4; Book X, nos. 439, 442; Book XI, no. 463; Book XVI, no. 528). In addition to merchants there are references to princes who traveled across the seas to make money (Book XXI, no. 539). The prosperity and status of these mariners is evident from the donations made by them to the Buddhist monastic establishments and recorded in the inscriptions of the Early Historic period. It was also at this time that maritime activity between South and Southeast Asia intensified, leading not only to increased commercial activity between the two but also to the spread of the religions of the subcontinent, especially Buddhism and Hinduism.

Among the as yet little-known trading groups in the western Indian Ocean are the Christian communities. The spread of Christianity beyond Palestine into Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and further east is a subject inadequately researched, though archaeological data for the presence of Christian churches and cemeteries is gradually emerging. In the fourth to seventh centuries CE, several tribal groupings in the regions now in the countries of Jordan, Syria, and Iraq are known to have adopted Christianity. Christian presence is known from southwest Arabia, and Christian monasteries located on the caravan routes in western Arabia functioned as caravanserais.

In the sixth century, an Egyptian monk, Cosmas surnamed Indicopleustes, wrote a learned treatise for the express purpose of disproving the sphericity of the earth. In the midst of several irrelevant topics, the *Topography* of Cosmas contains

interesting details about the island of Sri Lanka, as also accounts of his travels in the three gulfs: the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf. He mentions a church of Persian Christians on the island of Sri Lanka, and states that due to its central position the island was much frequented by ships from all parts of India and from the regions of Persia and Ethiopia. It is then evident that a Christian community was settled on the southwest coast of India in Kerala and Tamil Nadu from about 600 CE to the ninth century (Gropp 1991: 83–88).

For me it is significant that this study of trading networks allows me to move away from studying the history and archaeology of present political entities and to focus on the community and its mobility in its varied manifestations across the ocean. In this chapter, I have attempted to provide a few examples of the emerging identities and the interaction between the different groups involved.

FIGURE 5.1: BUDDHIST MONASTIC SITES IN EASTERN DECCAN

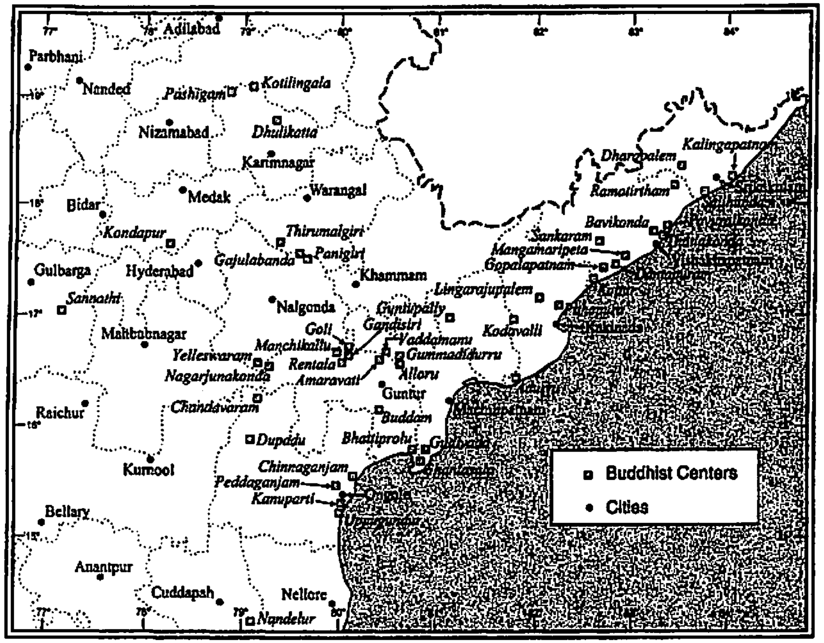


FIGURE 5.2: BUDDHIST MONASTIC SITES IN WESTERN DECCAN

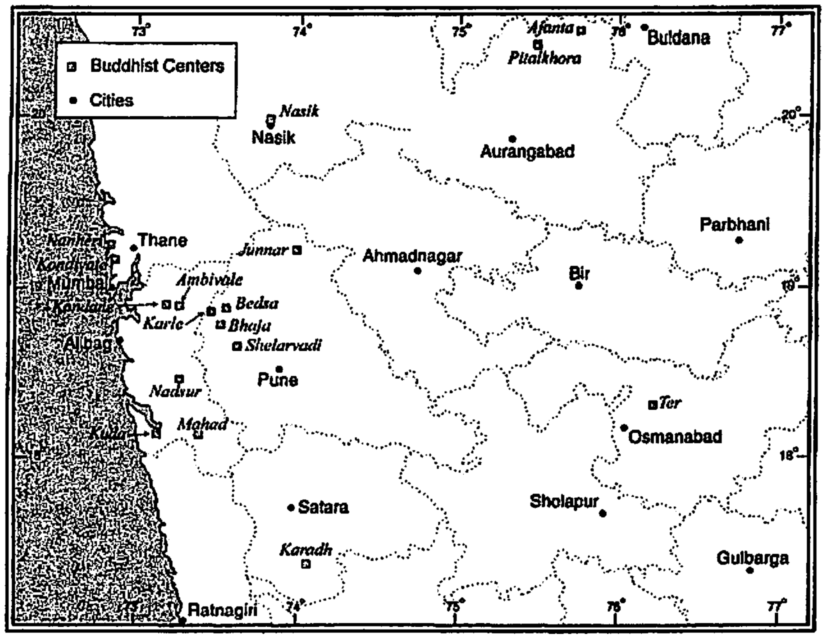


TABLE 5.1: BUDDHIST SITES WITH INSCRIPTIONS IN EASTERN DECCAN

Site	*Location*	*No. of Inscriptions*	*Royal Epigraphs*	*Date*
Dhanyakataka	Right bank of Krishna	200, of which 108 provide relevant data and have been tabulated	Aśoka, rano Sivamaka Sada, kumara Avatamaka, Pallava Simhavarman, Kota chiefs	3rd BCE to 14th CE
Bhattiprolu	6 kms from right bank of Krishna	3 stone receptacles	Raja Kuberaka	3rd–2nd BCE
Vaddamanu (Buddhist sites of Chinnakonda & Peddakonda)	10 kms southeast of Dhanyakataka	3 stone inscriptions	Rano Samaka	3rd BCE to 3rd CE
Jaggayyapeta	48 kms north of Dhanyakataka	2 complete inscriptions	Iksvaku ruler Virapurusadatta	3rd–6th CE
Thotlakonda	On coast, 16 kms from Visakha-patnam	12		3rd BCE to 3rd CE
Pavuralla-konda	On coast, 32 kms from Visakha-patnam	4 (including gift of land & village)		3rd BCE to 3rd CE
Kottur	On coast 52 kms from Visakha-patnam	1—on relic casket		2nd BCE
Salihundam	On coast in Srikakulam district	On stone slabs used for circum-ambulation path		1st BCE to 8th CE
Takkellapadu	6 kms from Guntur	Inscription on pillar (donation of land)	Mahatalavara	1st CE
Buddham	Guntur district	Inscription on sculptural panel		
Nandayapalem	Guntur district	3 label inscriptions		1st – 2nd CE
Nagarjuna-konda	Guntur district	75	Vijaya Satakarni; Iksvaku	200 – 300 CE
Kesanapalli	Guntur district	17 with 13 on slabs of circum-ambulatory path	Vasistiputa Siri Camtamula	2nd BCE – 3rd CE
Rentala	Guntur district	Pillar inscription	Regnal year of Vasisti-puta Siri Camtamula	3rd CE

Goli	Guntur district			3^{rd} CE
Ghantasala	Krishna district	4		2^{nd} CE
Uppugundur	On coast	Pillar inscription	In regnal year of Iksvaku Virapurisadatta	3^{rd} CE
Alluru	Krishna district	2 pillar inscriptions	Raja; mahatalavara (102 nivartanas of land); in regnal year of Iksvaku Ehavala Camtamula	3^{rd} CE
Kodavali	East Godavari district	Well inscription	Minister Sasa in reign of Siri Chamda Sati	3^{rd} CE
Guntupalli	On coast in west Godavari district	13 (including Buddhist creed formula engraved on stone)	Lekhaka of maharaja Kalingadhipati Siri Sada; gift of land by Salankayana ruler Nandivarman II (CE 450)	200 BCE to 10^{th} CE
Pedavegi	West Godavari district	4 pillar inscriptions		2^{nd} – 3^{rd} CE
Nandalur	Cuddapah district	Buddhapada inscription		1^{st} – 2^{nd} CE
Dhulikatta	Karimnagar district	3 inscriptions on Ayaka pillars & 1 on ivory seal		2^{nd} BCE to 2^{nd} CE
Peddabankur	Karimnagar district, 8 kms from Dhulikatta	4 inscriptions on terracotta and garnet seals & copper ring		2^{nd} BCE to 2^{nd} CE
Kotalingala	Karimnagar district	2		1^{st} BCE
Nelakonda-palli	Khamam district	1 (on votive *stūpa*)		3^{rd} – 4^{th} CE
Chandavaram	Kurnool – Vijayawada hwy.	2		2^{nd} BCE to 2^{nd} CE
Dupadu	Near Chandavaram	1		1^{st} CE
Chinaganjam	Prakasam district	1		2^{nd} CE
Malekonda	Prakasam district	1		3^{rd} BCE

Source: B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao, N. S. Ramachandra Murthy, B. Subrahmanyam, and E. Sivanagi Reddy, *Buddhist Inscriptions of Andhradesa* (Secunderabad: Ananda Buddha Vihara Trust, 1998).

TABLE 5.2: BUDDHIST SITES WITH INSCRIPTIONS IN THE WESTERN DECCAN

Site	*Location*	*No. of Inscriptions*	*Royal Epigraphs*	*Date*
Ajanta	Aurangabad district—on river Waghora	5		1^{st} BCE with 4^{th}–5^{th} CE excavations, sculptures, paintings
Ambivale	On river Ulhas	5		2^{nd} CE
Aurangabad	4 kms north of Aurangabad	—		1^{st} BCE with 4^{th}–5^{th} CE occupation
Bedsa	Pune district — eastern side of same hill range consisting of Bhaja group	3	Mahabhoja	1^{st} BCE to 4^{th}–5^{th} CE
Bhaja	Pune district	12	Maharathi	100 BCE–250 CE with 4^{th}–5^{th} CE paintings on pillars of caitya
Junnar	96 kms north of Pune	34	Usavadata	1^{st} BCE–2^{nd} CE
Kanheri	North of Mumbai	51	Mahabhoja; Maharathi; reign of Yajna Siri Satakani	1^{st}–11^{th} CE
Karad		1		1^{st}–2^{nd} CE
Karle	Pune district	35	Maharathi; Usavadata; reign of Vasithiputa Pulumavi	1^{st} CE to 4^{th}–5^{th} CE
Kol	3 kms southeast of Mahad in Kolaba district	3		1^{st} BCE to 2^{nd} CE
Kondane	Kolaba district	3		1^{st} BCE to 2^{nd} CE
Kondivate	Mumbai district 12 kms south of Kanheri	1		100 BCE with later images of Buddha
Kuda	Kolaba district	24	Mahabhoja	1^{st} CE to 4^{th}–5^{th} CE

Mahad	Kolaba district	3		1st to 2nd CE
Nadsur		2		1st BCE
Nanaghat	25 kms west of Junnar	8 – 7 label inscriptions	Satavahanas	1st BCE to 3rd CE
Nasik	8 kms from Nasik	26	Satavahanas; Usavadata	1st BCE to 4th–5th CE
Pale		1		1st BCE to 4th–5th CE
Pitalkhora	70 kms west of Ajanta in Aurangabad district	11		1st BCE with 4th–5th CE paintings on pillars
Shelarwadi	3 kms southwest of Talegaon	2		1st to 2nd CE

Sources: V. Dehejia, *Early Buddhist Rock Temples* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972); S. Nagaraju, *Buddhist Architecture of Western India* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1981).

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6

The Tidal Waves of Indian History

Between the Empires and Beyond

Harry Falk

FOUR PHASES

The time from the Mauryas to the Guptas can be broadly divided into four phases, which are closely linked to a series of dynasties. The first phase comes with the Mauryas proper. Of their origin nothing much is known; the Buddhists call them Śakyas, i.e., relatives of the Buddha, the brahmins regard them as inferior. They came to power when Hellenistic culture was spreading widely. Aśoka, in particular, appears to us as a man who was eager to introduce elements of Western culture, be it script or well-maintained road systems. According to one Buddhist tradition, his mother or grandmother was of Greek descent; he is proud of his connections with foreign rulers. This phase lasts from about 320 to about 185 BCE.

The second phase is indigenous, covered by the succeeding dynasties of the Śuṅgas, the Kaṇvas, the so-called Mitras, Dattas, and others. We know them through their coins (Mangalam 2002), partly also through inscriptions and seals. They seem to be children of the soil, and little contact with Western cultures is discernible. Their time-bracket may be set to roughly 185 to 50 BCE.

The third phase is dominated by intruding Westerners, be they of Iranian, Scythian, or Kushana stock. Around 50 BCE they start to advance from Gandhara into the Indian mainland; many move further down to east, south and central India. The Kṣatrapas start to govern most of the Indus plains and western India. They are followed by the Kushanas, ethnically different, but with identical intentions. They in turn succumb to pressure from the west and east around the middle of the third century.

The fourth phase is another phase of Indian resurrection. We recognize a dispersal of foreign rule and the return to traditional values. The movement culminates in the accession of the Guptas around 320 CE.

FORMS OF CHANGE

When we look at these 600 to 700 years we are witness to a whole series of changes taking place that involve the full framework of social order, economy, and technology.

In the following paragraphs I want to show how some well-known and some new inscriptions in Brāhmī as well as in Kharoṣṭhī script present evidence for changes of a general nature of two sorts.

One sort of evolution is linear, as, e.g., the development of the script. After the oldest type of Mauryan Brāhmī, all succeeding phases modify the prototype, never to return to the original state. With regard to the Brāhmī script, this evolution came to a certain halt about 500 years ago, when present day Nāgarī found its final shape, but is likely to set in again some time. Another example are the languages, or the forms of the traditional sacrifice, the Vedic *yajña*. All these linear changes permeate the four phases and are not much affected by political upheavals. All the changes of this sort are indigenous matters.

The second sort of change is of an oscillating nature. The character of the society changes twice in the time observed here, from an extroverted attitude, with thriving foreign contacts on an economic as well as scientific level to an introverted one, where traditional, or "brahmanical" values are preferred to inspiration gained from outside. Roughly speaking, the Mauryas made use of the Hellenistic brain drain; the succeeding Śuṅga Dynasty and its successors shunned intense foreign contacts; instead, traditional grammar and ritual were revived.

The succeeding foreign rulers of Śaka, Pahlava, and Kushana stock neglected the indigenous way of life and built centers of learning, e.g., at Ujjain, and made a living through intensive trade relations with East and West. The succeeding Gupta Dynasty reverted to indigenous values, to sciences of the word; inspiration from foreign sources began to come to a close. This oscillating pattern could be described as an alternation between an interest in the exact sciences and the science of letters; it could be described as a recurring shift between religious plurality and conservative henotheism or monotheism. At least to us, today, the recognition of new foreign elements seems to be an indicator of a positive attitude toward innovation. Twice in the time concerned, those who defeated or succeeded these innovative dynasties reverted to introspective self-containment.

It is tempting to continue thinking along these lines: after the Guptas and their successors, Muslim invasions again changed the country, linking it in many ways to powers and influences from the west and north. When Muslim hegemony dwindled away, British colonialists gained the upper hand. When we look back to the times before the Mauryas, we see other phases of ups and downs: the Indus valley culture had strong trade relations with the Near East; copper was procured from Oman, timber shipped to the Euphrates. The script has undeniable links to the proto-Elamite script; the weight system seems to reflect the Egyptian gold standard. After this period of innovation and exchange we get the Vedic culture, plain-cloth and simple, with pronounced poetical prowess, a predelection for rural settings. The mental sciences are favored, like astronomy, geometry, the science of ritual, logic, and metrics. Experimental sciences are widely absent—technology is simple and homemade.

Presently, since partition, India seems to be gradually moving back to another phase of introspection. Despite the thriving IT business in Bangalore, the main change observable to an outsider concerns the Hindutva ideology. Traditional values like the caste system are again being cherished as fundamental, foreign religions and attitudes are under attack. On the other side, the Vedic sacrifice in all grades of debasement is spreading rapidly, even into corners which would have been regarded as impure in earlier times. When will the BJP or some other traditional force perform the first national Aśvamedha?

FAMILY STRUCTURES AND TITLES

The tidal waves of attitudes can best be observed in the forms of self-description of royal donors as they develop over the centuries. These self-descriptions display relationships to the clan, and particularly to female members of the clan.

Aśoka, the first king whom we encounter in texts coming from his own office, called himself a *rājā*, nothing more than that. He is known to others as Aśoka, but his crown name is *devānāṃpriyaḥ priyadarśin*, "dear to the gods, pleasant to look at." Only one relative of his is known to us from inscriptions, i.e., Daśaratha, who handed the caves in Bārābar and Nāgārjuni hills over to the donee ascetics. His texts call him *devānāṃpriya*, but not *rājā*. Immediately after his coronation, *abhiṣeka*, he handed over the caves. It looks as if now that the texts are engraved, he is still "dear to the gods," but no longer a holder of royal dignity.

In Bactria and eastern Afghanistan the earliest of the Graeco-Bactrian kings to use an Indian term was Agathocles around 180 BCE. On the obverse of his coins we read *basileōs agathokleous*, and on the reverse he stuck to Indian habits with *rajane agathuklayasa* (Bopearachchi 1991: 175f.) It was Eucratides I, about ten years later, who changed all habits. He demonstrated his independence through the heaviest gold coin ever minted in this area. Having a diameter of 58 mm, it weighs 170 g. On this coin Eucratides enlarged the usual *basileōs/basileus* with *magalou/megas*, "great" (Bopearachchi 1991: 202). On some of his coins he also used Indian terms written in Kharoṣṭhī letters. For one issue he spoke of himself as *rajasa mahatakasa* (Bopearachchi 1991: 210). Already the next series introduces a plain *maharajasa* instead. This term is used by all Greco-Bactrian kings for their Indian legends thereafter, whereas most of them retain the simple *basileōs* for the Greek obverse.[1]

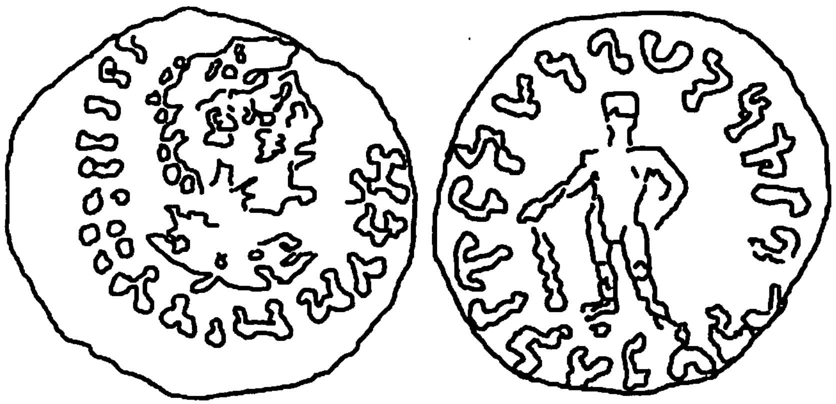
For the second phase, most Indian rulers stuck to the traditional *rājā*. One exception is King Kharavela from Orissa, who called himself *mahārāja* already in the first century BCE. At the same time in the west, habits changed again with the advent of the Śakas, who used *basileōs basileuōn megalou* for themselves, from Maues onward, copying an Iranian phrase, implying their own superiority to the Graeco-Bactrians. "King of kings" is also a standard title for the first Kushana in the first century CE, Kujula Kadphises. Apart from this foreign designation, he used the title *yavuga* in his own language.

Very recently, the first step toward the standard terminology was found on one of his initial copper issues: On the obverse the head of Augustus was copied, along with some pseudo-Roman letters. On the reverse, however, we find Hercules to the left with club and a legend: *kabisa maharajasa khuṣaṇasa yavugasa ṣaana* (figure 6.1). The coin

[1] For a survey of the Greek and Gāndhārī terms used, see Bopearachchi 1991: 387–389.

is in the possession of Prof. Pankaj Tandon, who kindly permitted its publication.[2] The legend is peculiar in several respects. First, the first name of Kujula is missing; then, Kadphises is simplified to *kabi*, clearly so to be read for the usual *kati*. The spelling of *khuṣaṇa* is already known from the Taxila silver scroll, again on a text mentioning Kujula, but usually the term *yavuga* stands alone (Alram 1986: 299), whereas here it comes with the genitive plural of *šah*, copying the *šao šaoana* of the Arsacids in Bactrian pronunciation, but supplanting *šao* by *yavuga*, as if *yavuga* were equivalent or superior to *šah*. The form of the genitive is *ṣaana*, showing that the loan was taken from the Persian language and not from the Bactrian. In all later issues the first name Kujula is there, *śao* is used for both cases and the spelling is Bactrian.

FIGURE 6.1: COPPER COIN OF KUJULA KADPHISES WITH UNIQUE TITLE PHRASE



Turning back to the Indian side, we see the Graeco-Bactrian ambassador Heliodor at Besnagar call his sovereign Antialkidas (ca. 115–95 BCE) a *mahārāja* and nothing else. He speaks of himself as "the son of Dion" (*diyasa putreṇa*). The local king is called *kosīputra bhāgabhadra trātāra*, "Bhāgabhadra, son of a [Kevala Aṅgirasa] Kautsī mother, the savior." Here we encounter for the first time a trait which is to govern native dignity for many centuries to come: whereas the foreigners regard themselves as superior (*mahārāja* vs. *rājan*),[3] they also speak of their male ancestors, whereas in local dynasties it is the mother's lineage which defines status. It is really remarkable how in Śuṅga times the mothers come to the fore. There must have been a very strong feeling behind this perseverance: it seems as if a ruler without a mother from a traditional brahmin family was lacking something. It can be guessed that this missing trait must have had something to do with purity, ritual and/or personal. If an

[2] It is now accessible at www.coinindia.com.

[3] M. Witzel pointed out at the conference that the *Mahābhārata* (8.30,80a) calls the western foreigners omniscient: *sarvajñā yavanā rājan śūrāś caiva viśeṣataḥ*.

Indian ruler mentions his male ancestors it is mandatory to show that they were born from a brahmin mother. The Śuṅgas left a pillar inscription at Bharhut. Here we have a real succession:

> *raño gāgīputasa visadevasa pauteṇa gotīputasa āgarajusa puteṇa vāchīputena dhanabhūtinā kāritaṃ toraṇaṃ*,
> This gate was made by Dhanabhūti, son of a mother from the [Bhṛgu] Vātsa *gotra* and of Āgaraju [Aṅgāradyut], himself son of a mother from the Gaupta *gotra* and of king (*rājā*) Viśvadeva, himself son of a mother from the [Bhāradvāja] Gārga *gotra*.

The earliest generation is represented only by the great-grandmother. Her husband is of no importance.

From the same dynasty another inscription preserved near Ayodhyā speaks of six generations since its founder, the general (*senāpati*) Puṣyamitra:

> *kosalādhipena dviraśvamedhayājinaḥ senāpateḥ puṣyamitrasya ṣaṣṭhena kauśikīputreṇa dhana (?devena?) dharmarājñā pituḥ phalgudevasya ketanaṃ kāritaṃ*,
> This memorial for his father Phalgudeva was caused to be made by the legitimate king Dhana (?deva?), overlord of Kosala, son of a mother from the [Viśvāmitra] Kauśika *gotra*, sixth [in generation] from the general Puṣyamitra, who had performed the Aśvamedha twice.

The donor calls himself only *rājā*; his illustrious forefather is not called "king" at all, but praised through the performance of the Aśvamedha, a ritual intimately intertwining the interests of brahmins and rulers.

The dynasty after the Śuṅgas is believed to be the Kaṇvas, to which the first inscription in real Sanskrit is attributed.[4] It was found in Ghosūṇḍī, Rajasthan, and near to it in three exemplars on a stone wall. The king calls himself:

> *bhāgavatena gājāyanena pārāśarīputreṇa sarvatātena aśvamedhayājinā*,
> adherent of the Lord (*bhagavat*), belonging to the *gotra* of the Gājāyanas, son of a mother from the Pārāśara gotra, performer of an Aśvamedha.

He does not mention his father by name; his mother occurs with reference to her brahmanical (Vasiṣṭha) gotra; even as a performer of the most-praised royal ritual he does not use the title *rājā*.

Five km upstream from Kauśāmbī lies the village of Pabhosā, where a cave high in the cliff contains two inscriptions of about the same period. Their contents are rather similar. In one of them we read:

[4] See Bhandarkar 1933–34b: 205, who equates the *gotra gājāyana* with the Kāṇva *gotra gādāyana*, as found in the *Matsyapurāṇa*.

adhichattrāyā rāño śonakāyanīpūtrasya vaṃgapālasya
putrasya rāño tevaṇīputtrasya bhāgavatasya putreṇa
vaihidarīputreṇa āṣāḍhasenena kāritaṃ
[This cave] was caused to be made by Āṣāḍhasena, son of a mother from the [Bhṛgu][5] Vaihidara *gotra* and of the king, adherent of the Lord, himself son of a mother from the [Vasiṣṭha] Traivarṇa *gotra* and of Vaṃgapāla, king of Adhichattrā, himself son of a mother of the [Bhṛgu] Śaunakāyana *gotra*.

It may be that his father is mentioned only as an "adherent of the Lord," or, less likely, that his name was Bhāgavata. In the former case we would be dealing with a person mentioned only indirectly. There are several cases where important people are not mentioned at all.

On the Maṇibhadra stone from Kosam (Sahni 1925–26:159; Sircar 1953) we read:

namo bhagavate sathavāhasa mānibhadasa gahapatikasa ejāvatiputasa varisa puto gahapatiko seliyāputo kusapālo nāma tasa putena gahapatikena gotiputena aśikāyaṃ kāritā vedikā piyataṃ [bhagavā].
[There was] a householder named Kusapāla (Kuśapāla), son of a mother from the [Bhṛgu] Śaila *gotra* and of Vāri, a householder, himself son of a mother of the Ijyāvata *gotra*. By his son, a householder, son of a mother from the Gaupta *gotra*, a railed platform was caused to be made.

The donor is not named at all. His father is named Kusapāla, a householder, the mother is a Gauptī. Kusapāla's father is a householder. His name in the genitive (*vārisa*) was added later between the lines. Initially, the grandfather's name was unnecessary, but not that of the *seliyā* mother. Vāri's mother is given as *ejāvatī*, most likely another *gotra*-name.[6]

Of course, this was not a royal donor, but there are other relatives of kings who prefer to stay unmentioned. One of them had an edifice built in the old town of Sāṅkāśya, in the first or second century BCE. The bricks used have been stamped with the following donation record:

bhadrasama sarvajivaloke prathamarathasa, bhaḍukaputasa jeṭhasa bhagaviputasa,

[5] Brough 1953 lists only *vaihīnari*, but see p. 79 n. 20 with the readings *vaihīnatayo*, *vaihitari*, and *vaihītarayo* in Baudhāyana.

[6] It is doubtful if *seliyā* can be traced back to the *śaila gotra* of the Bhṛgus, itself only known through the two forms *bidāḥ śailāḥ* and *avaṭāḥ śailāḥ* (Brough 1953: 81). The Ejāvata *gotra* is not known from other places, whereas females called *gotī* are found in some numbers, also in royal houses. Bhandarkar (1933–34a: 35) has argued at great length that this **gaupta gotra* is non-Vedic and rather the denomination of a kṣatriya clan, later developing into the well-known Guptas.

Of him, eldest son of a mother of the Bhārgava *gotra* and (son of) the brother of Bhadraśarman, the foremost hero in the whole living world.[7]

The donee is less important than his mother and his mighty relative.

As Altekar (1953–54: 119) has pointed out, another brick from Musānagar in the Kanpur district clearly refers to a king, although his title remains unmentioned. The letters on one side of the brick read:

//beke aśvavātāyaniputasa devamitasa aśvamedha,
[This brick relates to a] horse-sacrifice of Devamitra, son of a mother of the [Viśvāmitra] Āśvavātāyana *gotra*.

The script resembles more the Śuṅga than the Kṣatrapa style.

It is not surprising to see kings of brahmin dynasties refer to their brahmin mothers, but starting with the Śuṅgas the brahmin mother becomes a must for all those wishing to live in peace with the traditional ritualists. Examples could be multiplied. Even the originally non-brahmanical Sātavāhanas got into the habit of using this custom, which implied:

- power was transmitted through the male line, but
- the male line was purified through brahmin females;
- the individual felt less important; one rather mentioned related rulers of old or mighty contemporaries.

Whatever may be regarded as the real reason behind this custom of caring for a brahmanical mother, no kṣatriya was forced through any of his own traditions to search for recognition from the brahmins' side. Only if the custom were regarded as mandatory would every ruler be forced to link himself to a brahmanical *gotra* through his first wife. Sircar (1963) has dealt with rulers of mixed origins and aduced several examples where lower-caste rulers imported some brahmanical blood into their pedigree through fancy stories. In our cases, however, the blood was real and it was needed to transform non-brahmanical ruling families into brahmanical ones. Sircar (1941: 198 text line 7) pointed out that Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi claimed to be a brahmin, while the puranic tradition assigns his family to the *vṛṣala* or śūdra caste (Sircar 1963: 90).

While originally non-brahmin dynasties in the south behaved as brahmins, the Śaka invaders to their north displayed a purely patrilineal pedigree: on the Andhau Stone inscription of Caṣṭana and Rudradāman, all men are defined as sons of their fathers (e.g., *rajño cāṣṭanasa ysāmotikaputrasa rājño rudradāmas jayadāmaputrasa*). Many more examples are suitably collected in Sircar's *Select Inscriptions* (1941: 167ff.). The women of their family do not appear in such circumstances.

It is interesting to see a compromise appear in the middle of the first century CE in the house of the Kṣatrapa Nahapāna. Even in the royal house the donating ladies still

[7] Reading and translation differ from Sharma 1968. He misread *bhaḍuka* as "*bhaṭika* or *bhanika*": "Of Bhadasama (Bhadraśama) who is the first among the charioteers of the whole universe (?) and who is the elder son of Bhanika (Bhatika) and Bhagavi."

define themselves through their husband together with his father (Nasik Cave, Sircar 1941: 164):

nahapānasa dīhitu dīnīkaputrasa uṣavadātasa kuḍuṃbiniya dakhamitrāya.
(Given) by Dakṣamitrā, the daughter of Nahapāna, wife of Ṛṣbhadatta, who is the son of Dīnīka.

The brahmin minister of Nahapāna, however, introduces himself not as *vātsīputra* but, for the first time, as a *vatsa-sagotra* (Sircar 1941: 166 *vachasagotasa*), thus avoiding the mother's *gotra* and stressing the *gotra*-descent of the male line.

From the same time date the Śilāhāra cave inscriptions, southeast of Rewa. Here, the donating brahmin minister Mūladeva presents himself as a member of the (Bhṛgu) Vātsa *gotra* and son of a brahmin mother of the (Āṅgirasa) Maudgala *gotra*. Preceeding this, he names his great-grandfather Śivanandi, his grandfather Śivadatta, and his father Śivamitra (Bhandarkar 1933–34a: 36):

sivanaṃdipanatikena sivadatanatikena sivamitaputena vachena mogali-putena muladeva amacena silāgahā kāritā.

Roughly around 200 CE an Aśvamedha was performed near Kalsi, Dehra Dun district, by one King Śīlavarman. The many bricks used for the altar were stamped with a stanza (Ramachandran 1954):

nṛpater vārṣagaṇyasya poṇaṣaṣṭhasya dhīmataḥ,
caturdhāśvamedhasya cityo yaṃ śīlavarmaṇa
This is the altar of the learned King Śīlavarman of the Vṛṣagaṇa *gotra*, sixth (in line) from Poṇa, for his fourth Aśvamedha.

The female line is now completely discarded and the *gotra* has become a purely male affair. Just as with Dhana(deva?) at Ayodhyā, mentioned above, the line is counted back six generations to the prime figure of the dynasty.

At the end of this development, all dynasties had to have a brahmanical *gotra* to their name, supplanting the brahmin mother from outside the clan. Even the Pallavas—at least from Śivaskandavarman onward—claim to belong to the venerable Bhāradvājas.

The four phases of the period concerned can be classified as follows:

a) Under the Mauryas the women of the royal household are not given prominence. However, one of Aśoka's queens had a short text inscribed on the Allahabad pillar, displaying her will to go public. The king nowhere defines himself through the descent of his wife. As non-brahmins, the Mauryas were relatively free from the constraints of brahmanical self-definition.

b) The Śuṅgas start to mention the *gotra* of their mothers, as if a ruler without a brahmin mother were substandard. Inside India, the Sātavāhanas and many other dynasties take over the idea and stress their pure descent this way. A brahmin first queen started to become indispensible even for non-brahmin kings.

c) The foreign Kṣatrapas and Kushanas do not care a bit for this habit. They name their fathers but keep the mothers completely out of any text. However, as Schopen (1997: 250) has shown, women are prominent as Buddhist nuns and donatrices through inscriptions. They seem to enjoy a certain independence, joining the mendicant order of their own free will and acting as promoters of plastic art.

d) The Guptas again use a lady for their self-definition: the first king Candragupta is called the husband of a Licchavi princess on the coins issued in his name after his demise. This marriage is also mentioned in a standard formula in the predigrees of his descendants. Women are again used to demonstrate the purity and status of the family. Probably going hand in hand with this idea, women seem to withdraw from public life. Schopen (as above) has found that in Gupta times monks act as donors of statues, whereas nuns are almost absent.

There is a clear-cut divide between the odd and even phases: in Mauryan, Kṣatrapa and Kushana societies men and women enjoy participating in public affairs. One sex does not overemphasize its status on the base of the other. In Śuṅga and Gupta societies, however, women withdraw from public life, and thus withdrawn they help to enhance the purity and status of the males.

CURRENCY SYSTEMS

Another example for oscillating developments concern currency systems. As is well known, India took over the idea of metal currency rather late compared to its invention in Lydia in the seventh century, and its rapid spread in Achaemenid Iran in the following centuries. After a series of local silver issues, the Mauryas enforced a standardized currency in very good silver of a standard weight, with a fixed set of punched symbols and countermarks. Because of their metal-worth, these coins were in circulation for many centuries after the Mauryas.

The Śuṅgas issued only copper coins. Their state economy was either independent of a safe currency, or was affected by a shortage of precious metals. None of the local contemporary dynasties issued a silver coinage. We get the impression that indirect commerce using a high-value currency as a means of exchange was less favored by indigenous rulers.

The Kṣatrapas and Śakas started with good silver coins, kept up by the Kṣatrapas of Malwa all through their reigns. The Śakas in Gandhāra ran out of silver and ended up alloying it more and more with copper and other metals.

The Kushanas inherited a run-down currency in Gandhāra, but soon started to supplement the diluted silver and copper coins with newly introduced gold coins on a Roman weight base. Wholesale business was now possible, with one currency in a vast stretch from Bactria to the Ganges. The gold currency was the very basis for a prospering economy on a large scale, involving many agents inside the continent and many more coming from outside.

All the current modes of coin production were taken over by the Guptas, although on the whole the coin production seems to have declined and circulation to

have been limited.[8] First, the Kushana gold coins were copied. The most striking difference is in regard to the epigraphs. Where the Kushanas simply gave all the titles of the king, the Guptas started to develop perfect phrases, often following a metrical scheme, eulogizing the king and his victories. The Gupta mint-master had at least one poet in his staff. When Candragupta II vanquished the Kṣatrapas from Ujjain, he continued their silver currency as well, with the same standard portrait on the obverse as all the local predecessors. After Kumāragupta, the economy seems to have declined. Issues become scarce and soon come to a close. In the west, the Huns keep on coining even in silver, but in the center the markets had to cope without a strong currency.

The oscillating model is obvious: the foreign or foreign-inspired dynasties aim at a high-value currency of precious metals, whereas the first indigenous dynasties, the Śuṅgas and their contemporaries, tend to neglect the issue, and the second indigenous wave, the Guptas and their affiliates, soon lose their way economically.

The attitude toward large-scale enterprise apparent in this scheme reminds us of the traditional arch enemies, i.e., the Paṇis in the Ṛgveda or the Asuras in the Upaniṣads: the Paṇis are the rich merchants, as are the Asuras.[9] The people responsible for the Vedas and Upaniṣads maintained ideals of a very different nature: having a thousand cows was treasured, but making riches through trade and barter was disdained. Acquiring riches as *dakṣiṇā* at a sacrifice was accepted, but organizing production units involving possibly impure cooperators was not the core interest of those defining what Vedic *dharma* is and what it is not.

ARTS AND RELIGION

We have a few pieces of freestanding plastic art from the Indus valley culture, including portraits and animals chiseled in stone. Afterward, with the advent of the Vedic culture, we have nothing, apart from, probably, the weapons and implements of the Copper Hoards. Art of a larger scale starts with the Mauryas, starting with the stonework inherited from Achaemenid Iran. The lions on Aśoka's pillars appear out of the blue, nonetheless displaying a skill matured over centuries. Stone art bursts into India and must have been breathtaking for all those who hadn't even heard of such pieces. The pillars introduced by Aśoka[10] are testimony to an entrepreneur who did not shrink from doing what only the most illustrious rulers outside India had done before him: he had pillars produced of unbelievable dimensions, cut in one piece and transported to predefined places—pillars crowned with lions and bulls of an unprecedented naturalistic beauty. Pillars with crowning animals have their nearest

[8] At Vaiśālī, e.g., the Guptas founded a Caturmukh *liṅga*, but not a single coin of theirs was found in the layers topping those of the Kuṣāṇas (Sinha and Roy 1969: 132).

[9] Their riches (*vāmaṃ vasu*) *KS* 25.2 = *KapS* 38.5; *MS* 3.8.3.

[10] John Irwin, from 1973 onward, has given new life to pillar studies; unfortunately, initially he dismissed any Iranian connection and invented a religion fitting his interpretation of the pillars as axes mundi. His twisting of the evidence in favor of a pre-Aśokan origin of many pillars is another reason for the minor impact of his work.

parallels in Persepolis and Susa; the bell-shaped capitals have their origin in capitals and pillar bases at the same places. A tradition of producing naturalistic forms was apparently preserved in a group of stonemasons for decades after the downfall of the Achaemenid empire.

These forms contrast sharply with local styles. The most glaring, and to my knowledge unrecorded, evidence comes from a pillar at Rampurva, in the Indian Terai. The pillar, when found, still had the lower part of the lion attached to it, connected by a large copper bolt, 62 cm long with a weight of 37 kg. The lion was detached by the British excavator and later sent to the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The pillar always stayed close to its find-place. On its surface, including the flat surface covered by the capital, there are several animals, fishes, and peacocks (figure 6.2). I have no idea as to the meaning of the fish, which is also found on a dedication panel of Aśoka at a Karṇa Caupār cave at Bārābar; the peacock is easy to decipher: Sanskrit *mayūra*, Prakrit *mora*, hints at the dynasty of the Mauryas. The three peacocks on the Nigliva pillar (figure 6.3) may be a hint at the third of these peacocks, Aśoka himself. These peacocks are depicted in a style which can be found all over India. This style is Indian, and certainly not naturalistic. These peacocks are found on the shaft and also on the upper side of the pillar which was hidden by the lion until it was detached (figure 6.4). The same peacocks are also found on the lion itself, on either side between his forelegs and hindlegs (figure 6.5). There, they are again combined with a fish. There are two more pillars in the Terai decorated with peacocks, first the one in Nigliva, in the Nepalese Terai, the other one is the famous complete pillar at Lauriya Nandangarh. The peacock there is underground, mentioned by Carlleyle 1885: 46.[11]

FIGURE 6.2: FISH AND TWO BIRDS NEAR THE UPPER END OF THE RĀMPŪRVĀ LION PILLAR



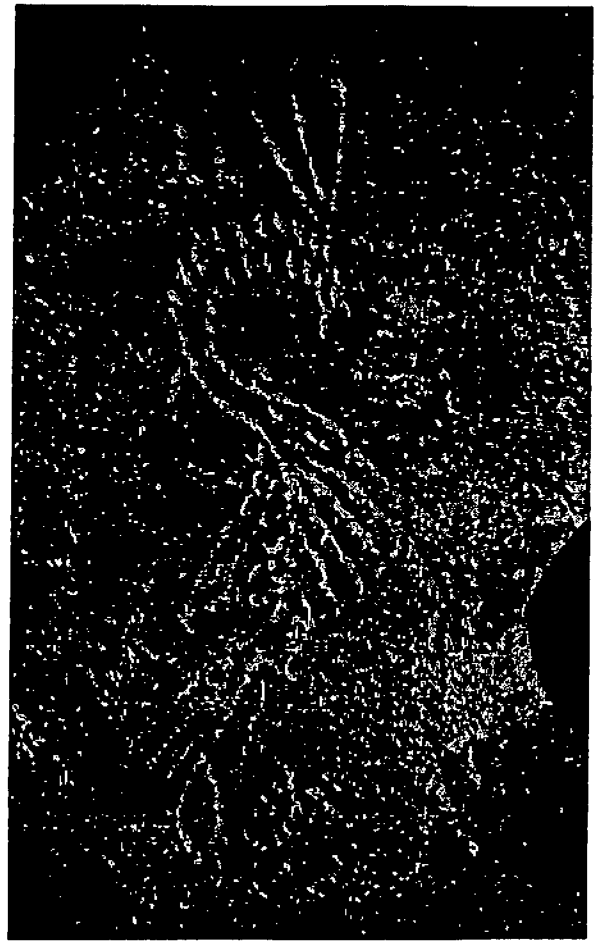
[11] "A little further down, below the projection, there was the figure of a peacock engraved in the stone; the figure being about four inches in length."

FIGURE 6.3: ONE OF THE THREE BIRDS ON THE NIGLIVA PILLAR



No greater difference in style could be imagined as that between the simple depictions of fish and peacock and the lions that bear these animals. There is no reason to believe that the drawings were added later. We see two styles, one with Iranian parallels and one with Indian. The Indian style might be compared to drawings on Rajastani houses; however, it is much older, even pre-Mauryan. Marsadolov and Mariak (2000) presented a silver mirror from Rgozikha in the upper Ob' basin, Siberia, from the fourth or third century BCE, showing a vīṇā-player in dhoti, dancers, and an elephant outlined in "folk style." The authors see a chronological gap between these objects from Siberia and "late medieval miniatures" which seem to be the first to present clear parallels on Indian soil. The birds and fishes on Aśokan pillars show at least that this very style can also been found in contemporary India.

FIGURE 6.4: ONE OF THE TWO PEACOCKS NEAR THE DOWEL HOLE OF THE RĀMPŪRVĀ LION PILLAR, UNTIL RECENTLY COVERED BY THE CAPITAL



Apart from pillars, Aśoka also left some caves at the Bārābar, Nāgārjuni hill, and at Sītāmarhī. These caves are cut so artistically according to complicated geometrical designs, and polished to such a perfection that they excite even modern man. Such art and skill came as a surprise, but it retained its attractive qualities. Aśoka, who had spent major parts of the state income to promote Buddhism, had started to expand the region of its community by constructing *stūpas* all over his realm, each one containing some ash of the Buddha. Some of these *stūpas* were decorated, each with one of his pillars, at Lumbinī, Sāñchī, Rājagṛha, Sārnāth, Śrāvastī, and some other places. The

stūpas and associated bodhi trees within a railing soon must have developed a certain touristic quality. With more and more visitors coming and donating, the need to keep their curiosity alive grew steadily. Since art was one part of the attraction, art

FIGURE 6.5: FISH AND TWO PEACOCKS BETWEEN THE LEFT LEGS OF THE RĀMPŪRVĀ LION.



developed into an integral part of every important religious site, leading ultimately to the picture galleries of the *toraṇas* of Sanchi or to the marvellous railings at Bharhut, to name only the most well-known pieces. Once Buddhism was running in perfect symbiosis with merchant sites, it kept running even when Aśoka's promotion had become a thing of the past. The importance of art for religion can be best imagined when looking at the shattered Buddhist sites of Bharhut or Bodh Gayā: the Hindu fanatics of old with their sledgehammers were no iconoclasts, they only wanted to deprive their religious rival of a major part of his attractiveness. Xuanzang gives many examples, as narrated in the seventh century (Beal 1884 1: 221, 240).

Even after Aśoka, under the Śuṅgas, pillars were cut in Aśokan style, polished, and erected. But the affiliation was not Buddhist any more, it was Bhāgavata, e.g., in

Kauśāmbī and Bhilsā, where the capitals show symbols of the *pañcavīras*. A capital from Gupta times has been called a "recut" Aśokan capital, but it is a new production, as seen by its number of petals, its shape, and by the absolutely original position of the twelve signs of the zodiac right under the claws of the lion. A reworking would have had to penetrate deep into the stone. Nonetheless, this piece shows that there was the will 600 years later to be on a par with Aśoka artistically, although for a different religious addressee.

The so-called Mauryan polish is also found on the Kauśāmbī pillars from Mainahai and their capitals; another possibly Śuṅga pillar has been reerected near the Mucilinda lake in Bodh Gayā. The shape is similar to an Aśokan pillar, but there are differences in the polish; the hole on top is square instead of round, and above all, the stone is not of the usual spotted sandstone erroneously called Chunar sandstone, but has very different inclusions, larger, the size of irregular pockmarks. The famous torso from Lohanīpur in the Patna Museum is made from the same stone. This shows that the technique of pillar cutting and stone polishing survived for several decades if not centuries; and also that the idea of naturalism—as apparent in the Lohanīpur torso—was not dependent on Aśoka's direct influence.

Art helped to attract devotees, and the means of art changed the idols themselves. Colossal figures of *yakṣas* were hewn out of stone, obviously not for Buddhist communities. These huge figures must have been a serious threat, competing in attractiveness with the picture walls of the Buddhists (Dass and Willis 2002). Attractions made from stone in the compound of one religious group soon led to a demand for something similar in the compound of any other. Vedic religion does not lend itself to being cut into stone. The local cults, however, are more flexible. Popular cults often centered around a simple stone in its natural setting. It is certainly not by chance that the *yakṣas* are the first pieces of Hindu plastic art. They are too low in status to offend a stout Vedic brahmin, and they are regarded as so useful for the adorant that they can keep major parts of the population from giving all their donations at the Buddhist sites. That means: art changed religion, an idea of art that came ultimately from Iran.

The fight for the devotee continued for centuries to come. The figure of the *yakṣas*, developed in mainland India in Śuṅga times, may have been one of the reasons why in Gandhāra the Buddha as Bodhisattva was later cut in stone, under the Kṣatrapas and Śaka rulers. People demanded life-size idols and the *yakṣas* were testimony enough that is was worth having one in one's compound.

As Schopen (1997: 247) has shown, the *yakṣas* led two Buddhist mendicants—monk Bala and nun Buddhamitrā—deliberately to have had *yakṣa*-like upright statues of the Buddha created in Mathurā and to have had them transported to Kauśāmbī, Sārnāth, and Śrāvastī, erecting all of them near the local *caṅkama* of the Buddha. The production started in the year 2 of Kaniṣka, about 130 CE. In this case, the development can be linked to two persons and a very short period of time. At least at Sārnāth, the erection of the statue was done in cooperation with two affluent foreigners, the *mahākṣatrapa* Kharapallāna and the *kṣatrapa* Vanaṣpara (Schopen 1997: 245).

The idea of copying attractive modes of art is not restricted to *yakṣas* and Bodhisattvas. In Mathurā, some Jainas had the idea of creating a full-fledged *stūpa* in their name. Based on a depiction on an offering slab, *āyāgapaṭṭa*, it came with *toraṇa*,

umbrella, railing, and decorative ladies as only Buddhist *stūpas* do (Smith 1901: 19, pl. XII). This Jain *stūpa* seems to have remained the only one of its kind. The script looks pre-Kaniṣkan, and so the *āyāgapaṭṭa* has been dated to the end of the first century CE, quite close to the time of Bala and Buddhamitrā.

Apart from the "heretic" sects of the Buddhists and Jainas, remarkably little was produced for standard "Hindu" groups. The semidivine figures of the *yakṣas* were made rather sparingly, whereas the likewise semidivine Nāga won considerable ground. Despite a small number of early *liṅgas*, objects for the Śaivas or Vaiṣṇavas do not belong to the first stage of art production, but rather come to the fore with the advent of the Guptas in north India and the Hūnas in Gandhāra, when Buddhism lost ground considerably.

To sum up: art appears in the first phase and creates the conviction that good art attracts people to places of worship. Art produces devotees. The Buddhists benefited first and all other groups were obliged to follow suit. Some forms created for the first phase were maintained in all succeeding ones. The Aśokan pillar was copied through the Śuṅga, Kushana, and Gupta phases. Anthropomorphic figures of semidivine beings came in the second phase, as a reaction to the Buddhist monopoly. In the third phase of the Kṣatrapas and Kushanas, the Hindu anthropomorphs were topped by the more outstanding beings of the Buddha or the Jina, until in a fourth phase, antedating the Guptas, the higher Hindu cults also started to depict their gods in full attire more regularly.

This development could be regarded as linear: stone art for heretics; semidivine anthropomorphs for the traditionals; divine anthropomorphs for the heretics; divine anthropomorph for the traditionals. Still, there are differences. The heretics, i.e., the Buddhists profiting from Aśoka in the first phase, adopted the products of a new technology without ideological problems. The traditional culture would have been much more reluctant to connect anything made from stone with its gods or its places of sacrifice. Vedic religion is averse to stone; it prefers wood, earth, and burnt earth. Apart from sand and pebbles for building purposes, there is only one stone required occasionally for symbolical reasons, the *svayamātṛṇṇa* stone, having a natural perforation. Stones and service to the gods have no traditional link in Vedic thinking.

In order to survive, however, some less strict thinkers had to react. Again, the Buddhists made the next step from semidivine to divine without much ado. For a Śaiva, a mere round stone is symbol (*liṅga*) enough for the presence of a god who cannot be properly depicted anyway. However, once the religious opponent became too attractive through his use of anthropomorphs, those in charge of Śiva or Viṣṇu had to tackle him with his own weapons, implying that indigenous ideas about the perfect representation of divine forms had to be given up.

We see two things: (a) The foreign-inspired groups make the first and the third step, to the advantage of the modern art lover, but without any contradiction to their own ideology. The initial push comes from their side. (b) The traditionalists react in defiance of their own habits. Their steps are much harder, since they have to give up old traditions. The effort is on their side. This effort led to Hinduism as we know it from the epics and Purāṇas. Many of its manifestations would never have come about without the antipodes starting the use of plastic art cut in stone.

Apart from religious art there is also a profane art, of a semireligious nature. We know that the Kushanas had family temples called *devakula* or *bagolango*, with statues of their forefathers. To depict a monarch in stone in freestanding plastic art fits with the self-esteem also apparent in their titles. The indigenous Śuṅga and related dynasties have left no such pieces, neither did the Guptas, who at least depicted the king on their coins—continuing the Kushana tradition.

RELIGIOUS PLURALITY

India is known as the country of thousands of gods; Hinduism is labeled polytheistic. However, Max Müller's idea of henotheism is much closer to the facts. Hindus may offer to thousands of gods, and it doesn't really matter what god one's neighbor prefers, he is still a good Hindu as long as he is of the impression that behind all these many names and rites just one supreme god is active. This idea is Vedic, with an Avestan parallel, and in many variants it is still one of the basic ideas of Hindutva.

The Mauryas did not care too much about state religion. Candragupta was close to the Jainas, Bindusāra preferred the Vedic religion, Aśoka gave to Ājīvikas, brahmins, and then predominantly to Buddhists. What his successors did we do not really know. Aśoka told the adherents of local, non-Vedic cults, to follow his example and revert to just one religion, Buddhism. His way was through advice and acting by example.

The Śuṅga takeover aimed to stabilize Vedic religion; their zeal was toward one religion and in some form against too much patronage for other religions, particularly Buddhism.

The deities venerated in Bactria and in Gandhāra are well known from the coins of the Greco-Bactrian and Śaka rulers. We get almost the full range of classical gods, from Zeus to the Dioscures, Athena, Nike, Poseidon, and many more. Here, in the West, we encounter a true polytheism. There is no highest principle hidden behind all of them. The foreigners are polytheists.

The same applies to the Kushanas, who in more than one way try to connect themselves to the established Greek and Roman dynasties. Kujula copies the portrait of Augustus; he copies Greek inscriptions on the obverse side of his coins. Vima Takhto calls himself *soter megas*, in Greek, and depicts himself as Mitras with the rays of the sun radiating from his head.[12] Kaniṣka on his very first gold issues gives the gods classical Western names, be they Greek like Helios, Hephaistos, or Selene, or Near Eastern like Nanaia. Soon after, he reverts to the Bactrian language, naming Athśo, Mao, Miiro, Nana, and Oeśo;[13] the plurality of gods stays the same. His son Huviṣka follows in his line. These Kushana kings present themselves as polytheists, not only with a pantheon of Bactrian origins but also including "Babylonian" gods like Nana or even the Greco-Egyptian Serapis. Purely Indian gods are there: Boddo is rare on Kaniṣka's gold and bronze issues; very sparingly, Huviṣka adds Maadeo, Skando, and Komaro Bizago. The Kushana's polytheism is international.

12 I thank Frantz Grenet for pointing this out.

13 To avoid confusion the closing o-s are retained as seen on the coins. As N. Sims-Williams has shown, these vowels are of a purely graphical nature, not pronounced in actual parlance.

Starting with Vima Kadphises, a restriction takes place. This king has only one god on his coins, the male Oeśo with or without his bull. As has been shown by many recent contributions, this latter god is related linguistically to the Iranian Vayuś, so he is a wind-god, or better, if we keep the Hittite city- or wind-gods in mind, the god responsible for general welfare. He brings good or bad weather, he bestows rain or drought, plenty, or scarcity. He does what Śakra, alias Indra, does in an Indian context: he gives times of welfare or punishes with periods of decay. The same god alternating with Ardoxsho is again used for the coins of Vasudeva and for his mostly nameless successors. The same pattern is repeated in the early issues of the Guptas, where Oeśo/Vayuś has mutated into an iconic form of Śiva.

So within the Kushana family we see a similar plurality as was found with the Mauryas. But, at a time when in the whole "old world" monotheism was a much-discussed topic, this idea was also taken up by some Kushanas, in various forms: Kujula's religion is impossible to know; Vima Takhto had a predelection for an Iranian monotheism, Vima Kadphises was more attracted by the Bactrian Oeśo, Kaniṣka and Huviṣka were open to every god from the West including Oeśo; Huviṣka was the first to open the gates to traditional Indian gods. On some initial issues (Alram 1986: 307), Huviṣka also thought of Hindu gods, like Skanda, Kumāra, Viśākha, and Mahāsena, i.e., all names of Skanda or Kārttikeya.[14] In all later issues he preferred Bactrian and Near Eastern gods. Vasudeva returned to Nana and Oeśo.

The Guptas seem to have reacted to this mess: the figure of Oeś-turned-Śiva was maintained in the beginning, but soon Viṣṇu on his Garuḍa became the one and only god. With the Guptas, monotheism also won out in India.

The survey showed that the foreign or foreign-inspired dynasties were rather permissive with regard to religions: everybody according to his liking. The indigenous dynasties, however, rather than being polytheistic develop a sense for one common religion, be it Vedic brahmanism or Viṣṇuism. Tolerance is only practiced within the henotheistic microcosm; it is not maintained against systems undermining the ideological and financial basis of this microcosm.

THE PERCEPTION OF TIME

It was shown on another occasion (Falk 2002) that Indian eras start well into BCE times, but most of them were installed post festum, around the beginning of the Christian era. In roughly one century we witness the introduction of the Maues era at the capital of this Śaka king at Taxila, with its presently unknown starting point. Better known is the Azes era of 57 BCE, surviving as *vikrama saṃvat*; it was introduced in Gandhāra by another group of foreign Śakas and was for a long time confined to that area. The likewise foreign Kushanas adopted an era going back to the beginning of the second century BCE, possibly introduced to connect their lineage to the victory over Mauryan western India by Demetrios in 185 BCE. This era becomes apparent in the

[14] This can be compared to the addition of *maasēno* and *bizago* between the lines of the Rabatak inscription, supplementing the Western gods in the text from Kaniṣka's time (Sims-Williams and Cribb 1995–96: 79 n. 1).

time of Vima Kadphises predominantly at places of ancestor worship, so that I called it the *devakula* era. A more neutral era was introduced in Ujjain, again by the foreign dynasty of the Kṣatrapas in 78 CE. It survived as *śakābda* to this day. In between the Mauryas and the Śakas or Kushanas, the brahmanical Śuṅgas and Kaṇvas never cared for any era; the most we get is a vague reference to a dynasty (*śuganaṃ rāje*, "in the reign of the Śuṅgas") on the Bharhut *toraṇa*, or to a king, e.g., *sāmidate rajaṃ kārayaṃtaṃmhi*, "when Svāmidatta was exercising power" (Bhandarkar 1933–34a: 36). After the Kushanas, the Guptas needed quite some time to adopt the idea of an era from their predecessors. In their first fifty years the Śaka era was occasionally used at Mathurā and continued on some coins of Candragupta II after his taking of Ujjain. Even after the Guptas had introduced their own dynastic reckoning, another era was kept up concurrently right into the fifth century CE. This concurrent era is of considerable importance, first, since it has never been fully understood, and second, since it provides another argument for the absolute dating of the Kushana era, supplementing my earlier arguments (Falk 2001) for a start in 127 CE. The technical details will be published separately (Falk 2004). For the flow of arguments, only the content will be presented.

When the rule of the Kushanas had finally faded out, the Guptas arose as the one and supreme power in northern India. Today, we would expect them to initiate their rule with the introduction of a new dynastic era, but, in fact, they didn't. For a long time they regarded their own era as unnecessary. Their first truly dynastic date so far is found on the so-called Mathura pillar of Candragupta II (Chhabra and Gai 1981: 240), dating from the end of the fourth century, roughly sixty years after the dynasty was founded. In this document the first Gupta date is accompanied by the term *kālānuvartamānasaṃvatsare*, "year of the continuing time," a term which occurs on three more pieces, all datable to the reigns of Candragupta II and Kumāragupta. Since two pieces contain this era along with true Gupta dates we know that this era started in the years ending in 27 in the fourth and in the fifth century, so that it is most likely continues (*anuvartamāna*) the Kushana era (*kāla*) of 127 CE, as is to be expected, with "dropped hundreds."

For our model the development of eras can be summarized: in the time of the early Mauryas not even the Hellenistic rulers had introduced a continuous era; nonetheless Aśoka gives us a number 256 in some of his Minor Rock Edicts, obviously some sort of counting in long terms. We will not expand on this topic here (see Falk 2002: 83). The Śuṅgas left no trace of timekeeping, a fact possibly due to circumstance. The foreigners like the Śakas started introducing eras in Gandhāra; the Kṣatrapas start their own era in Malwa, the Kushanas use a long-term era and a new one introduced by Kaniṣka. The Guptas, initially, did not care about their own era; they seem to have used the Kushana era for half a century without hesitation. A crucial point may have been reached by the victory over the Kṣatrapas of Malwa through Candragupta II. At the time of one particular issue of a silver coin there existed two eras at the same time in his dominion, the Kushana era, called *kālānuvartamāna*, on several stones, and the Kṣatrapa or Śaka era on the obverse of a Gupta coin minted in Śaka style. Possibly as a reaction to this double standard, their own Gupta era was introduced. However, since it was new, and not known everywhere, it was supplemented at some places with the corresponding year in the era used so far, i.e., the

Kushana era. The Gupta's initial behavior is telling: they did not care ambitiously for external time reckoning. They cared for the year, for the arrival of the sun at Udayagiri (Dass and Willis 2002: 37); their feeling for time reminds us of the Vedic predelection for Prajāpati as the year, the ever-recurring, ever-repeating single god, manifesting himself in millions of products, including gods.

CONCLUSION

The time between the empires was cut into four sections, two of them governed by the foreign-inspired Mauryas and the foreigners of Śaka, Kṣatrapa, or Kushana descent, two of them ruled by dynasties with rather indigenous values, the Śuṅgas and the Guptas. The examples chosen were (1) family structures and titles, with particular attention to the role of women in the self-definition of men, (2) the currency systems, with attention to the preferences for small- or large-scale business, (3) arts and crafts, with attention to the impact of art on religion, and (4) perception of time, again a question of self-definition, in this case dynastic self-definition through eras.

All cases have yielded similar results: the foreign or foreign-inspired dynasties display an extroverted attitude; they have contacts to foreign rulers, they deal in large scale with foreign economies; they present themselves as individuals; men look at their male forefathers, women enjoy roles in public life. The kings want people to count their reign in dynastic years and they are polytheistic, with remarkable tolerance. The indigenous dynasties, however, are the very opposite. Their main attitude is introverted; they are modest in their titles and stress their descent from pure brahmin mothers, when at the same time women withdraw from public activities. The economy is rather local with no or little need for high-value currencies; their religion is basically henotheistic; their feeling for time is Vedic with no need for a starting point.

This dichotomy is a gross simplification, and it would be easy to point to exceptions here and there. However, the differences between the odd and even phases are evident, clearly following a trend which starts as an undercurrent, gains momentum, and finally cedes to a current from the opposite direction. The question is to find out who or what triggers the reversal. The material presented above seems to show that the mass and quality of ideas coming in the wake of intruding peoples from the north and west initiated an outburst of new cultural and social activities, which are accepted by some, tolerated by many, and opposed by a handful. In the course of time the handful become many, collectively pointing to the high value given to the indigenous tradition. They succeed in reestablishing the traditional society, incorporating, however, as much as was found useful from the opponent.

In short, Indian history comes in waves moving between extremes or at least between antipodes, between two attitudes or mentalities summarized as extroversion and introversion. Extroversion was imported and, at least today, introversion is exported by diverse gurus and yoga teachers. The actual attitude inside India is dependant on the reception or repulsion of foreign influence. Since partition, repulsion has been gaining ground.

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PART TWO

Reading the Past: Texts and History

7

Explorations in the Early History of the Dharmaśāstra

Patrick Olivelle

The absence of the term *śāstra* in the vedic texts, including the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads,[1] and the relative frequency of its use in the literature falling broadly within the period "between the empires" raise a set of questions relating to the emergence of the *śāstra* genre in the fourth to fifth centuries BCE. In this study I focus on a single subgenre within *śāstra*, namely the Dharmaśāstra. Why did a class of technical literature (*śāstra*) devoted to *dharma* arise in the second half of the first millennium BCE? What were the social, political, and religious contexts within which this genre of literature was created? Was its creation simply a natural development of Brahmanical scholasticism, or was it a response to external challenges? And, finally, how did the expert tradition created by this genre respond to the new challenges and changing circumstances during the first six or seven centuries of its existence, centuries that saw the rise and demise of two empires, the Maurya and the Gupta, and the rise of foreign dynasties including the Greek-Bactrian, the Śaka, and the Kushana?

The term *śāstra* is found for the first time in Yāska's *Nirukta* (1.2, 14), where the reference is probably to the science or a text of etymology (*nirukta*). Likewise, the *Ṛgvedaprātiśākhya* (11.36; 14.30) uses the term to refer to the *prātiśākya* tradition. Kātyāyana and Patañjali use it with reference to Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*.[2] Likewise, the *Vedāṅgajyotiṣa* uses the term to refer to astronomical treatises.[3] Significantly, however, the latter text uses the expression *vedāṅgaśāstrāṇām*, indicating that the *śāstra* may have been used as a generic term covering treatises dealing with the Vedāṅgas. Yet, it is notable that *śāstra* is never used with reference to the specifically ritual manuals, the Śrautasūtras and the Gṛhyasūtras. The term occurs only in the *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra* (1.6.21), and there it appears to refer to the Veda. We find *śāstra* used with reference to the literature on *dharma*, however, as early as the *vārttika* of Kātyāyana, who uses the expression "Dharmaśāstra."[4] This brief sketch indicates that *śāstra* may have been used first with reference to manuals of instruction that were useful

[1] The term occurs only in a single passage of the Ṛgveda 8.33.16, where the meaning of the term is far from clear.

[2] See especially Kātyāyana on Pāṇini 1.1.1 (1, p. 8); 1.1.1 (10); .62 (1); 1.1.62 (1); 2.1.1 (16); 6.1.84 (4).

[3] The Ṛgvedic recension, 25, 36.

[4] *dharmaśāstraṃ ca tathā.* Kātyāyana on Pāṇini 1.2.3, vārttika 39 (I: 242).

in understanding the Veda and practicing the Vedic rituals, but significantly not with reference to specifically ritual texts.[5]

Even though the tradition considers the earliest texts of *dharma*, the Dharmasūtras, to form part of the Kalpasūtras that included also the Śrautasūtras and the Gṛhyasūtras, it was only the texts dealing with *dharma* to which the label *śāstra* came to be attached. This may indicate that in reality the tradition considered texts on *dharma* to constitute a special category and that its connection to the other two categories of ritual sūtras was not original.[6] The hypothesis I put forward here is that Dharmaśāstra did not develop as an integral part of the ritual literature produced within the Vedic *śākhās*; it developed instead as an autonomous genre. This brings up the crucial question: how and why did this genre of literature come into being? This is a question that has not been raised in any of the extant "histories" of Dharmaśāstra (Kane 1962–75 and Lingat 1973), a question that needs to be answered at least hypothetically if we are to understand the early history of this śāstric literature.[7]

DHARMA AND THE BEGINNINGS OF DHARMAŚĀSTRA

One possible reason for the neglect to examine the origin of the Dharmaśāstra genre is the assumption by most scholars that the term and concept of *dharma* has always been central to the Brahmanical understanding of religion, society, and the cosmos, and that scholarly discourse on this topic must have been an ongoing activity among Brahmanical schools constituting the Vedic branches (*śākhā*).[8] Another reason may have been the conviction that *dharma* had a primarily ritual dimension and was ultimately based on the Veda, and exegetical and interpretive works dealing with the Veda, therefore, must necessarily involve discussions of *dharma*.[9] Both these assumptions, I believe, are wrong.

The term *dharma* was probably a neologism invented by the poets of the Ṛgvedic hymns; it has no cognates in other Indo-European languages, including Avestan.[10] Although the term occurs sixty-seven times in the Ṛgveda, the frequency drops dramatically in the middle and late vedic literature. As I have shown elsewhere,[11] *dharma* is a marginal concept in the theology expressed in the Brāhmaṇas and the early Upaniṣads; it is used principally within the royal rather than the strictly ritual vocabulary.[12] The likely reason for its rise to prominence within the religious discourse of India between the fourth and fifth centuries BCE is its assumption, along with other terms and symbols of royalty, by the newly emergent ascetic religions, especially Buddhism, and its use for an imperial theology by Aśoka in the middle of the third century BCE. Given the marginality of *dharma* in the vedic vocabulary, it is unlikely that the term would have been the subject of intense scholarly or exegetical inquiry during the late vedic period. To claim that during the Vedic period "*dharma* was *par excellence* the sacrificial act which maintains and even conditions the cosmic order" (Lingat 1973, 3) simply ignores the facts and projects later Mīmāṃsā views onto the vedic discourse. The fact is that the major scholastic works on the ritual, the Śrautasūtras and Gṛhyasūtras, hardly ever use the term *dharma* either with reference to ritual activity or with reference to the ritual and other duties of a brahmin (Olivelle 2004d). Why then do we see the proliferation of Dharmasūtras during the last three or four centuries BCE?

The hypothesis I want to propose is that once *dharma* had become a central concept in the religious discourse of Buddhism, and once it had penetrated the general vocabulary of ethics, especially through its adoption by the Maurya emperors, certainly by Aśoka and possibly also by his predecessors, in developing an imperial theology, Brahmanical theologians had little option but to define their own religion, ethics, and way of life in term of *dharma*. Indeed, the scrutiny of the early meaning of *dharma* within its Dharmaśāstric use suggests that it was not the Veda but the "community standards" prevalent in different regions and communities that were taken to constitute *dharma*. The early texts on *dharma* speak of *deśadharma*, *jātidharma*,

5 Etymologically derived from the verb √*śās*, to instruct, the term *śāstra* refers to an instrument of such instruction, probably a manual used for instructional purposes.

6 I do not mean that Vedic *śākhās* did not produce literature on *dharma*. They evidently did, as seen in the works ascribed to Āpastamba, Hiraṇyakeśin, and Baudhāyana. My point is that the expert tradition on *dharma* probably did not arise as an integral part of the ritual tradition of scholarship.

7 A notable exception is Wezler (2004), who raises significant points regarding the origin and codification of the early Dharmasūtras.

8 Kane (I: 19) says: "It seems that originally many, though not all, of the *dharmasūtras* formed part of the Kalpasūtras and were studied in distinct *sūtracaraṇas*," and views *dharmasūtras* as "closely connected with *gṛhyasūtras* in subjects and topics" (I: 20). Lingat (1973: 18) concurs: "Originally, it seems, most of these *dharma-sūtras*, if not all of them, belonged to a collection of *kalpa-sūtras* and were attached to a particular Vedic school."

9 Lingat (1973: 3), for example, asserts: "During the Vedic period the fundamental laws of the universe were identified with the laws of the sacrifice. Consequently *dharma* was *par excellence* the sacrificial act which maintains and even conditions the cosmic order."

10 For detailed studies of the early history of the term *dharma*, see Brereton 2004 and Horsch 2004.

11 I have dealt with this topic at length in two articles. In Olivelle 2004d I have dealt with the semantic history of the term in the middle and late Vedic period, continuing thus the work of Brereton 2004. In "forthcoming-a" I have dealt with the use of the term in Aśoka and in early Buddhism and proposed possible ways in which the term may have entered the mainstream of the theological vocabulary of Brahmanism. I will not argue this point at length here, therefore, referring the reader to these two earlier works.

12 The most frequent occurrence of the term is in connection with the royal consecration (*rājasūya*), but even though the consecration is a ritual act the term is used principally to point out the functions of the king. Here I disagree both with Horsch (2004 [1967]) and with my friend and mentor Albrecht Wezler (2004, 633), who asserts: "I assume that the Mīmāṃsā was stimulated to apply this term [*dharma*] to the content of the Vedic prescriptions only by the Dharmaśāstra, even though it has already been a well-known term in the sacrificial context, there denoting the cosmos-sustaining and life-preserving power." My studies of the Vedic vocabulary has shown that at best *dharma* is a marginal concept in the vocabulary of the middle and later Vedic texts.

kuladharma— the *dharma* of regions, castes, and families/lineages. Clearly, these texts regard *dharma* as multiple and varied; each of these kinds of *dharma* can hardly be expected to be based on the Veda.[13]

The tradition of Vedic exegesis and hermeneutics known as Mīmāṃsā, however, exerted a strong influence on the Dharmaśāstric tradition, and gradually that influence led to the dominance of the Veda as the principal if not the single source of *dharma* within the theological understanding of the term, something that Wezler (2004, 643) has called the "*vedamūlatva* concept," a concept that was first articulated by Gautama (*GDh* 1.1). As we will see, "community standards" came to be restricted to the standards of Brahmanical elite, the *śiṣṭas*, living within a theologically defined sacred geography known as the *āryāvarta*. In spite of this theologizing, *dharma* of the Dharmaśāstras remained rooted in the normative practices of the various communities. Wezler (2004, 643) remarks that religiosity based on *dharma* in contradistinction to the elitist sacrifice led to "a democratization regarding the access to salvation." I think this is noteworthy and important, because if we place the origin of Dharmaśāstra within the context of Brahmanical response to the "democratic" ethics and religion preached by Buddhism and the new ascetic religions, we can better appreciate both the sociological context of the rise of this genre of literature and the significant role it played in the new Brahmanical religiosity and soteriology.[14]

Lariviere (2004) and Wezler (2004) have argued, convincingly I believe, that the historical source of *dharma* in the Dharmaśāstras is not the Veda but "custom" (*ācāra*), that is, the normative behavior and practices of various and varied historical communities. Lariviere (2004, 612) presents his view of the nature of Dharmaśāstra clearly: "Let me begin by giving my view of the nature of the *dharmaśāstra* literature. I believe that the *dharmaśāstra* literature represents a peculiarly Indian record of local social norms and traditional standards of behavior." Wezler (2004, 642) agrees completely with this new view of the source of *dharma* in Dharmaśāstra: "The *dharma* of the Dharmaśāstra . . . is, in its essential parts, a record or codification of custom and convention." In seeing the Veda or some transcendent tradition as the source of *dharma*, historians of Dharmaśāstra have bought into the theological position enunciated in most of the Dharmaśāstras themselves as to the provenance of the *dharma* that they are teaching, thus confusing history with theology.[15]

All extant texts on *dharma* begin with a discussion on the means of knowing (*pramāṇa*) or the sources of *dharma*. Although there are some differences in the texts,

[13] Yājñavalkya, in fact, explicitly states that when a king conquers a land he should make sure that the customs of that land are protected; he should not impose the custom of his own region on the newly conquered land: *yasmin deśe ya ācāro vyavahāraḥ kulasthitiḥ / tathaiva paripālyo 'sau yadā vaśam upāgataḥ* II *YDh* 1.343.

[14] A similar hypothesis regarding the composition of the great epic, *Mahābhārata*, has been proposed by Hiltebeitel (2001, forthcoming) and by Fitzgerald (2004, 114–123).

[15] Even the later Brahmanical tradition is not unanimous is seeing the Veda as theologically the single source of *dharma*. Medhātithi, the author of the earliest extant commentary on the *MDh*, in the context of the duties of the king, states explicitly that not all of *dharma* is based on the Veda: *pramāṇāntaramūlā by atra dharmā ucyante na sarve vedamūlāḥ* (on *MDh* 7.1).

by and large, they point to three sources: Veda (or *śruti*), *smṛti*, and normative custom (*ācāra*). The *GDh* (1.1–2) provides the most explicit statement: "The source [or root] of *dharma* is the Veda, as well as the tradition and practice of those who know it [the Veda]"—*vedo dharmamūlam / tadvidāṃ ca smṛtiśīle*.[16] The category of *smṛti* is somewhat unclear; it may refer to the living memory of the Brahmanical community or to written sources of such immemorial customs. Clearly by the time of Manu *smṛti* meant texts, because he equates the term with Dharmaśāstra. The Mīmāṃsā tradition of vedic exegesis, which exerted a strong influence on the Dharmaśāstric tradition from its very inception, began to interpret the multiple sources of *dharma* as having their origin in a single source, the Veda. This is stated explicitly by Manu (2.7): "Whatever *dharma* Manu has proclaimed with respect to anyone, all that has been taught in the Veda, for it contains all knowledge"— *yaḥ kaścit kasyacit dharmo manunā parikīrtitaḥ / sa sarvo 'bhihito vede sarvajñānamayo hi saḥ* // Veda contains all knowledge and thus, a priori, should contain all *dharma*. This position is already hinted at in the above statement of the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* when it qualifies that only the tradition and practice "of those who know the Veda" are authoritative. The authority of tradition and practice are here implicitly connected with the Veda. Āpastamba (*ĀpDh* 1.12.10–12) provides the earliest evidence of the hermeneutical argument for the position when he claims that all rules were originally found in the Brāhmaṇas; but some sections of these were lost over time, and they can be recovered by observing the practice: "All rules are described in the Brāhmaṇas. The lost Brāhmaṇa passages relating to some of them are inferred from usage"—*atha brāhmaṇoktā vidhayas teṣām utsannāḥ pāṭhāḥ prayogād anumīyante*. Here we have the Mīmāṃsā concept of *anumitaśruti*, that is, Vedic passages that are inferred to have existed on the basis of either *smṛti* or practice.[17] Given the other statement of Āpastamba on the sources of *dharma* that I will discuss below, however, this particular statement may indeed refer only to matters relating to Vedic ritual (*vidhi*) and not to *dharma* as such, especially because it is made within the context of explaining the daily recitation of the Veda. The "lost Veda" argument will be used later, however, to underpin the authority of other sources of *dharma* within the theological fiction that the Veda is the sole source of *dharma*. The Mīmāṃsā view of *dharma*, then, is that the Veda is the sole means of knowing it; when a specific vedic text is wanting with regard to a particular aspect of ritual or behavior, then one can use supplementary sources, such as *smṛti* and *ācāra*, on the basis of which one can infer the existence of a vedic text.

This theological claim that camouflages the historical sources of *dharma* is pointed out by Lariviere (2004, 612): "What I mean is that the whole of the *dharma* corpus can be viewed as a record of custom. It is not always a clear record because of the idiom and the fictions that came to be the mode of expression of the *dharma* literature. That the *dharma* is a record of custom is obfuscated by the fact that the idiom of all the

[16] For an examination of the meanings of *smṛti* and *śīla*, see Wezler 2004. The process whereby the Veda came to be considered as the only or primary source of *dharma* is called by Wezler (2004, 643) "vedification."

[17] This doctrine was known to Āpastamba (1.4.8), who says that "a vedic text has greater force than a practice from which the existence of a corresponding vedic text has to be inferred"—*śrutir hi balīyasy ānumānikād ācārāt*.

dharma literature is one of eternality and timelessness. This means that there are no contemporaneous references which can help us to establish the chronology of these ideas nor is there admission that custom and practice changed and evolved over time. It is further obfuscated by the fact that the *dharma* literature clings to the claim that all of its provisions can be traced directly or indirectly to the Veda, the very root of *dharma*." Indeed, as Pollock (1985, 1990) has shown, the reason for the "idiom of eternality and timelessness" is precisely the theological imperative that to be based on the Veda means to transcend time and historical context and change.[18]

The historical reality is very different from this theological position. The *dharma* taught in the Dharmaśāstras has little to do with the Veda but reflects the actual practices of local groups; the Dharmaśāstras themselves are nothing but the textualization of such practice. Evidence from texts belonging roughly to the last three centuries before the Common Era indicates that this is not merely a historical conclusion of modern scholarship; it appears to have been the view of at least three major authors belonging to the early period of Dharmaśāstric textual production: the grammarians Kātyāyana and Patañjali, and Āpastamba, the author of both a Gṛhyasūtra and a Dharmasūtra.

Kātyāyana, in his *Vārttikas* on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, makes a distinction between what is found in the Veda (*vede* and *vaidika*) and what is prevalent in the world (*loke* and *laukika*). The major use of these two categories is for grammatical purposes, giving examples from the Vedic texts and common speech, the two areas of language encompassed by the early Sanskrit grammars.[19] At least in Patañjali's understanding of Kātyāyana, the category of *laukika* (worldly) does not apply simply to what ordinary people say and do but to norms of behavior encoded in textualized form that are certainly Dharmaśāstric injunctions. The clearest example of such injunctions is found in Patañjali's commentary on Kātyāyana's *Vārttika* 5 (on Pāṇini 6.1.84; III: 57–58), which contains the expression *yathā laukikavaidikeṣu*. Here the examples given by Patañjali support the view that in teaching *dharma* (*dharmopadeśa*) the injunctions refer not to individuals (*avayava*) but to categories or classes (*anavayava*).[20] As *laukika* examples, Patañjali gives: *brāhmaṇo na hantavyaḥ* ("A brahmin should not be killed"), *surā na peyā* ("Liquor should not be drunk"), and *pūrvavayā brāhmaṇaḥ pratyuttheyaḥ* ("An older brahmin should be greeted by standing up."). If these injunctions are taken as referring to an individual rather than to a class, then someone could fulfill the obligations by not killing a particular individual brahmin, by not drinking liquor once, and by rising up to greet a single older brahmin on a single occasion, after which time he is free to kill brahmins, to drink liquor, and not to rise up to greet older brahmins. This is obviously erroneous; so we must assume that the injunctions refer to classes rather than to individuals. The Vedic example given

18 For a more extensive treatment of the connection between *dharma* and Veda, see Heesterman 1978.

19 See Kātyāyana's *Vārttika* 2 on Pāṇini 1.2.45 (I: 217); 15 on 6.1.1 (III: 3); 5 on 6.1.83 (III: 55); 2 on 6.2.36 (III: 125).

20 The terms used here are *avayava* and *anavayava*, literally "part" and "non-part." The terms are somewhat obscure, but they appear to refer to individuals (*dravya* or *vyakti*) and classes (*jāti* or *ākṛti*).

in this context is: *vasante brāhmaṇo 'gniṣṭomādibhiḥ kratubhir yajeta* ("In the spring a brahmin should offer sacrifices such as the Agniṣṭoma"). Here also the obligation is a continuous one and cannot be fulfilled by doing this act once. In support of the *laukika* injunction that a younger person should rise when approached by an older person, Patañjali cites a verse, which is found also in Manu (2.120):

> *ūrdhvaṃ prāṇā hy utkrāmanti yūnaḥ sthavira āyati |*
> *pratyutthānābhivādābhyāṃ punas tān pratipadyate ||*
> For when an older person comes near, the life breaths of a younger person rise up, and as he rises up and greets him, he retrieves them.

Other *laukika* examples also show that they are actually Dharmaśāstric in nature. Thus on Pāṇini 1.1.1 (I: 5, 8) Patañjali repeats the following maxims twice: *abhakṣyo grāmyakukkuṭo 'bhakṣyo grāmyaśūkaraḥ* ("It is forbidden to eat a village fowl; it is forbidden to eat a village pig"),[21] injunctions that are common in the Dharmaśāstras. He also gives the well-known maxim (on Pāṇini 1.1.1; I: 5) *pañca pañcanakhā bhakṣyāḥ* ("The five five-nailed [animals] may be eaten").

What is significant here is that for grammarians both the Veda and the *loka* are *pramāṇa*, authoritative with respect to correct speech. This authoritative nature of *loka* is carried over into the Dharmaśāstric framework when Patañjali cites injunctions. Clearly, not every thing that is said or done in the world is so authoritative. Thus *loka* for Patañjali and most likely also for Kātyāyana referred to Dharmaśāstra. We have confirmation of this conclusion. The two examples on not killing brahmins and not drinking liquor cited above, that Patañjali refers to *loka* at on Pāṇini 6.1.84; III: 57–58, is cited by him again in his comments on *Vārttika* 39 on Pāṇini 1.2.64. The *Vārttika* read *dharmaśāstraṃ ca tathā* ("And so also Dharmaśāstra"), and as an example of "Dharmaśāstra" Patañjali gives: *brāhmaṇo na hantavyaḥ surā na peyā* ("A brahmin should not be killed; liquor should not be drunk"). Clearly, for Patañjali *loka* and *dharmaśāstra* are, if not synonyms, at least equivalents with respect to authoritative injunctions.

The question that still remains is whether *dharmaśāstra* as used by Patañjali refers to texts as treatises such as the extant Dharmasūtras or to the individual maxims that he cites. Wezler (2004, 642) has drawn attention to this issue in examining the meaning of "text" within the history of early Indian law: "Methodologically speaking, however, I consider it very important in this context to expound the problems of the notion of 'text' . . . because the consideration of textual genesis—and textual history—in India advises caution in using the term 'text'. Thus in the present case, one may consider the possibility that certain 'legal phrases' which constitute the contents of the Dharmaśāstra, originated initially without any connection to similar or dissimilar phrases as elements of 'tradition' (*smṛti*). In other words, the textualization might have begun with single elements of custom and legal tradition." Clearly *dharmaśāstra* in Patañjali may well refer to such individual legal or moral pronouncements. I think, however, that evidence points to the fact that Patañjali views the rules he cites as derived from "texts" in the sense of a complete treatise or *śāstra*.

21 Also repeated on Pāṇini 7.3.14 (III: 320)

Patañjali uses the term *dharmaśāstra* with reference to such texts and cites individual norms from such treatises. The general pattern of use of the term *śāstra* during and prior to this period shows that it was used with reference to treatises, such as the Veda or the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, rather than single pronouncements. In his comments on Pāṇini 1.1.47 (I: 115),[22] Patañjali's statement: *naiveśvara ājñāpayati nāpi dharmasūtrakārāḥ paṭhanty apavādair utsargā bādhyantām iti* ("Neither does the Lord command nor do the authors of Dharmasūtras declare: 'General rules should be set aside by special rules'") also points in this direction. Not only does this show that Patañjali was familiar with the genre of literature called *dharmasūtra* that had authors, it also shows that in his mind the autors of Dharmasūtras paralleled *īśvara*. Now, it is unclear what or whom Patañjali refers to by this term. The term *īśvara* (Lord) here, in the understanding of the later commentator Nāgojibhaṭṭa, refers to the Veda. According to this interpretation, for Patañjali the Dharmasūtras were as much texts as the Veda. It is more probable, however, that *īśvara* refers to the king,[23] in which case the authors of Dharmasūtras parallel the king in authority to pronounce on matters of public importance. It is extremely unlikely that singular injuctions are referred to here by *dharmasūtra*, and that the authors are merely stating individual injuctions. Even the proponents of "floating legal maxims" do not contend that they had actual and identifiable authors. In the early literature, furthermore, the titles Dharmaśāstra and Dharmasūtra were synonyms, the former referring to their substance and the latter to their linguistic form. Even in classical texts we do not find the distinction that modern scholars make between Dharmasūtras and Dharmaśāstras, the latter referring to texts composed in verse.[24]

There is another class of ancient texts, the Gṛhyasūtras, that are similarly divorced from the Veda. Wezler (2004, 641) summarizes his assessment of the two classes of texts: "Gṛhyasūtras as well as Dharmasūtras are verbalizations of certain regional or tribal-specific aspects of traditional social 'practice' of the Āryas. Although historically consecutive, they surely have factual points of contact. These verbalizations are textual 'coagulations' of the late Vedic period that were apparently regarded by the authors as fundamentally different from older parts of the tradition." Even though it is clear that the domestic (*gṛhya*) rites are different from the vedic (*śrauta*) rites and are based on customary practice of the community, the authors of the Gṛhyasūtra texts themselves do not feel the need to make this distinction explicit or inquire about the sources of these rites. Only the *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra* (1.1.1) has this very brief comment: "Next, the rites that are obtained from customary

[22] The identical wording *naiveśvara ājñāpayati nāpi dharmasūtrakārāḥ paṭhanti* is also found in Patañjali's comments on Pāṇini 5.1.119 (II: 365).

[23] This is confirmed by Patañjali's statement on Pāṇini 6.1.2 (Kātyāna's *vārttika* 9; III: 7): *loka īśvara ājñāpayati* where the command of the Lord refers to worlds (*laukika*) matters and not Vedic. Here, clearly, the *īśvara* is the king and not the Veda or god. I thank Madhav Deshpande for his help in resolving the meaning of *īśvara* in Patañjali. Further, in his comments on Pāṇini 1.1.38 (I: 177), Patañjali clearly states that *īśvara* is a synonym (*paryāya*) of *rājan* (king). See also his comments on Pāṇini 2.3.9 (I: 447).

[24] Even Yājñavalkya, composed around fourth–fifth century CE, lists under *dharmaśāstraprayojakāḥ* the authors of the ancient Dharmasūtras.

practice"—*atha karmāṇy ācārad yāni gṛhyante*.[25] Again the rules of Gṛhya are taken to be based on customary practices rather than on the Veda.

Indeed, no other *śāstra* of the early period saw the need to explicitly address the question of how one comes to know (*pramāṇa*) its subject matter. The issue of sources is passed over in silence.[26] Why did the authors of the earliest texts on *dharma* feel the need to address this issue explicitly?

I want to propose the hypothesis that the authors of early Dharmaśāstras were working both within the model provided by the Buddhist texts and in response to the Buddhist appropriation of *dharma*. The Buddhist theory of *dharmapramāṇa*, that is, the way one knows whether a particular oral text is authoritative, is articulated in the doctrine of *buddhavacana* ("Buddha's word"). Either proximately or ultimately all pronouncements on *dharma* must go back to the words of the Buddha himself for those pronouncements to have any authority or validity. This conviction is encapsulated in the opening words of every Buddhist text: *evaṃ mayā śrutam* (Pāli: *evam me sutaṃ*): "Thus have I heard."[27] It is probable that the Brahmanical scholars writing on *dharma*, a term that we have noted did not have a central role within the previous Brahmanical discourse, were consciously responding to this Buddhist theory by proposing a different *pramāṇa*, a different authoritative source of *dharma*. This source they found at first not in the Veda, which has little to say on the topic, but in the customary norms and practices (*ācāra*) of living communities, among which, we must suppose, the practices of the Brahmanical community were considered the model and yardstick. The conclusions of Wezler and the use of the term *sāmayācārika* by Āpastamba as the first source of *dharma* support such an hypothesis. We also saw that for Patañjali Dharmaśāstric prescriptions were located principally in *loka*, that is, the actual practices, behavior patterns, and pronouncements of living communities rather than in the Veda.

The problem for the authors of the *śāstras* was how to limit and control the enormous diversity with respect to norms of conduct prevalent in the different regions, castes, and communities across that vast land. The early history of the Dharmaśāstras testifies to the continuing efforts to define and limit the universally authoritative practices to those prevalent in Brahmanical communities, and even there to draw boundaries, both geographical and ideological, around especially authoritative brahmins.

[25] The commentator Haradatta, however, is explicit: *dviprakārāṇi karmāṇi śrutilakṣaṇāny ācāralakṣaṇāni ca* / "Rites are of two kinds, those characterized by the Veda and those characterized by customary practice." See also *Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra* 3.7.23. It is very likely that the author of the Dharmasūtra and of the Gṛhyasūtra ascribed to Āpastamba was the same individual (Olivelle 2000, 4, n. 5). On the customary nature of the Gṛhya material, see also *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra* 3.3.29; *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* 1.7.1.

[26] Later texts, such as the *Mānava-Dharmaśāstra*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and the medical *śāstras*, do deal with its provenance, but not in terms of authoritative sources but in terms of their mythical origin from the creator god.

[27] What connection the evolution of the term *śruti* to mean the Veda has to this usage of the Buddhists is unclear. No historical-linguistic work has been undertaken thus far on the crucial term *śruti*. For an attempt at relating *śruti* and *smṛti*, see Pollock 1997.

THE EARLY HISTORY

When the earliest Dharmasūtras were written (or orally composed and transmitted) has been a matter of scholarly conjecture. If my argument for the history of the term *dharma* and its incorporation into an expert tradition within Brahmanism is accepted, however, then the earliest writings on *dharma* cannot be earlier than second half of the fourth century BCE, perhaps even somewhat later. As we have seen, the earliest reference to Dharmasūtra is by Patañjali, generally assigned to the middle of the second century BCE. The term Dharmaśāstra is used by his predecessor Kātyāyana (*kārikā* 39 on Pāṇini 1.2.64; I: 242).

There are four extant Dharmaśāstric texts written in the sūtra mode and ascribed to Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha.[28] It is evident, however, that a much larger body of literature on *dharma* did exist in the three centuries prior to the Common Era. The extant Dharmasūtras cite or refer to opinions of seventeen authorities.[29] Although it is unclear whether the statements ascribed to them are single memorable quotes or derived from larger compositions authored by or ascribed to those individuals, it is probable that at least some of these authors did write Dharmasūtras that have not survived. This is clearly the case with Hārīta, who is cited eight times by Āpastamba, and once each by Baudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha. Hārīta's positions were conservative, clearly to the right of what Āpastamba considered the mainstream. Both Āpastamba and Baudhāyana cite him as saying simply and imperiously "That is false" (*mithyā etad*) with reference to opinions of others: in Baudhāyana (2.2.21) against those who say that the children of those excommunicated from caste do not become outcastes themselves; and in Āpastamba (1.28.16) against suicide as a penance for those who commit incest. At another point Hārīta claims that a person who covets another's property is a thief, an opinion shared by two other Dharmasūtrakāras, Kaṇva and Puṣkarasādi, whereas Vārṣyāyaṇi thinks that there are exceptions, such as fodder for an ox. Hārīta, however, is unconvinced and asserts that in all cases the owner's permission must be obtained (*ĀpDh* 1.28.1–5). All the citations of ancient authors in the extant Dharmasūtras are in the context of diverse opinions and controversies on various points of proper conduct and ritual procedure.

28 For the dating of these texts, see Olivelle 2000, 4–10. I take Āpastamba to be the oldest, followed by Gautama. Wezler (2004, 650, n. 11) calls Kangle's argument for placing Gautama late "not entirely convincing." Besides the arguments I have spelled out in the above work, it is very clear that Gautama represents a much more advanced stage in the development of thinking regarding judicial procedure (*vyavahāra*), as can be seen by comparing the four Dharmasūtras on this subject in my forthcoming *Dharmasūtra Parallels* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass).

29 Aupajaṅghani (*BDh* 2.3.33); Bhāllavins (*BDh* 1.2.11; *VaDh* 1.14); Eka (*ĀpDh* 1.19.7); Hārīta (*ĀpDh* 1.13.11; 1.18.2; 1.19.12; 1.28.1, 5, 16; 1.29.12, 16; *BDh* 2.2.21; *VaDh* 2.6); Kaṇva (*ĀpDh* 1.19.3; 1.28.1); Kāṇva (*ĀpDh* 1.19.2, 7; Kapila (*BDh* 2.11.28); Kaśyapa (*BDh* 1.21.2); Kātya (*BDh* 1.3.46); Kautsa (*ĀpDh* 1.19.4; 1.28.1); Kuṇika (*ĀpDh* 1.19.7; Kutsa (*ĀpDh* 1.19.7); Mahājajñu (*BDh* 3.9.21); Manu (*ĀpDh* 2.14.11; 2.16.1; *GDh* 21.7; 23.28; *BDh* 2.3.2; 4.1.13; 4.2.15; *VaDh* 1.17; 3.2; 11.23; 12.16; 13.16; 19.37; 23.43); Maudgalya (*BDh* 2.4.8); Puṣkarasādi (*ĀpDh* 1.19.7; 1.28.1); Vārṣyāyaṇi (*ĀpDh* 1.19.5, 8; 1.28.1).

Clearly we have here a vibrant scholarly debate on a variety of issues, very different from the later tradition which sought to present a singular point of view eliminating or interpreting away divergent voices.

The Brahmanical community in ancient India, although it shared some common interests especially in preserving its privileges, was not monolithic. As I have shown elsewhere (Olivelle 1993), brahmins represented diverse interests and points of view, especially in the realm of religious ideas and institutions. Some clearly favored the ascetic movements and ideologies that emerged in the middle of the first millennium BCE and were the architects of the new and somewhat revolutionary theory of the four *āśramas*. One question that emerges from our discussion of the creation of the new genre of literature dedicated to *dharma* is this: from what segment of the Brahmanical community did the authors of Dharmaśāstric texts come? There is, of course, no clear and definite answer to this, but a clue may be found in the manner the early Dharmasūtras are organized.

All the ancient Gṛhyasūtras begin with marriage and the establishment of a household with a new ritual fire. This is only to be expected, as the entire Brahmanical ritual system and way of life are centered on the married householder. The Gṛhyasūtras then follow the married householder through his life, providing instruction about a variety of subjects, especially the procreation of children, their initiation and education, their eventual marriage, and finally death and funerary ceremonies. One would have expected the Dharmasūtras to follow this model, given that they are also principally concerned with the married householder. That, however, is not the case. After a brief discussion of the sources of *dharma*, the authors of Dharmasūtras begin their works with a long discussion of Vedic initiation (*upanayana*) and the period of Vedic study that a student embarks upon his initiation (*brahmacarya*).[30] What is the reason for this structural change? The model of the original *āśrama* system and the organization of the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*, I think, provide some clues.

As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Olivelle 1993), the original system of four *āśramas* envisaged four permanent states of life chosen by a young adult upon the completion of his vedic studentship. Four *āśramas* are open to that young adult: to remain a permanent student, to get married and become a householder, or to enter either of the two ascetic modes of life, forest hermit or wandering mendicant. It must be remembered that in the original system the preparatory period of study after vedic initiation is *not* viewed as an *āśrama*. Rather it was a kind of novitiate that prepares the young man to *choose* one of the permanent modes of adult life envisaged in the *āśrama* system. If the early composers of Dharmaśāstric texts were following or were under the influence of the *āśrama* model in envisioning human life, then we can see their logic in beginning the treatises on *dharma* with initiation and the temporary studentship that opened the way to assuming one of the four adult modes of life. Indeed, this is precisely the structure that is found in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*. It begins with the sources of law followed by a discussion of initiation and the duties of a temporary

30 The exception is the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*. This text, unfortunately, has had a problematic transmission and it is very unclear whether the structure of the extant text is original. The sequence of topics does not follow any logical plan and initiation and studentship are dealt with in the middle of chapter 11.

student (ch. 1–2). Chapter 3 is devoted to a discussion of the *āśrama* system and of three of the four *āśramas*, permanent student, hermit, and mendicant. As Gautama rejects the validity of this system in the last *sūtra* of chapter 3, he is able to pass on to a discussion of marriage and the householder in chapter 4, the only *āśrama* that he considers valid.

As the examples of Gautama and Baudhāyana show, several authors of Dharmasūtras were clearly antagonistic toward the *āśrama* system in general and ascetic and celibate lifestyles in particular. What the structural differences between the Gṛhyasūtras and the Dharmasūtras show is that the creators of this new genre of texts were either partial to or influenced by the new and revolutionary system of the *āśramas*, so much so that even those writers who did not agree with that system followed the structural model created on the basis of that system.

Within the new structure of the Dharmasūtras, the first topic of discussion is the sources or the means of knowing *dharma*. As I have already noted, it is clear that the historical sources from which the authors derived their rules and norms were the actual customs, practices, conventional rules, moral precepts, and the like prevalent in different communities. These sources are given different terms that have similar and overlapping semantic ranges: *ācāra* (*ĀpDh* 1.1.1; *VaDh* 1.5), *śīla* (*GDh* 1.2), and *āgama* (*BDh* 1.1.4). The authoritative nature of the customary practices of a family, caste, village, or region is recognized by the authors. This recognition undercuts the theological argument that *dharma* is derived solely from the Veda. Nevertheless, the vedic exegetical tradition (*mīmāṃsā*) influenced Dharmaśāstric thinking from the very beginning. What we see in the early Dharmsūtras is a sustained attempt to limit the authoritative source of *dharma* so that it would be in the hands of brahmins. We see a very broad-minded and liberal attitude regarding who can teach *dharma* in the work of Āpastamba. He says that the knowledge found among women and śūdras is a valid source of *dharma*, and that, according to some, aspects of *dharma* not taught in Dharmaśāstras can be learned from women and people of all classes (*ĀpDh* 2.29.11, 15).

This liberal attitude changed over time. For Gautama, the only source of *dharma* is the Veda and the memory and conduct (*smṛti* and *śīla*) of those who know the Veda, thus firmly restricting its teaching to brahmins. The major shift, however, occurs perhaps in the middle of the second century BCE with the parallel introduction of two novel concepts: the notion of *śiṣṭa* and the definition of Āryāvarta as a sacred and authoritative region. With the notion of *śiṣṭa* we find the introduction of a restricted community of brahmins who are viewed as both learned and virtuous; it is their conduct and memory that should be trusted in matters of *dharma*. Thus Baudhāyana (*BDh* 1.1.4) gives *śiṣṭāgama* (the conventions of *śiṣṭas*) and Vasiṣṭha (*VaDh* 1.5) *śiṣṭācāra* (conduct of *śiṣṭas*) as a third source of *dharma*, after the Veda and *smṛti*, which by this time had come to mean a textualized form of memory. We have a parallel development in the grammatical tradition, with Patañjali looking to the *śiṣṭas* as the source of correct Sanskrit.

Now, the term *śiṣṭa* in its usage as a substantive to refer to certain kinds of brahmins is not very old. It is not found with this meaning in the Vedic Saṃhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the early Upaniṣads, the Śrautasūtras, or the Gṛhyasūtras. It is absent in the vocabulary of Yāska's *Nirukta* and Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. The earliest usage I can

trace is in Kātyāyana's *Vārttika* (3 on Śivasūtra 2: I: 20) and the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* (2.24.3). It is remarkable that even though both Āpastamba and Gautama[31] know and use the term, they do not connect it with the sources or *pramāṇa* of *dharma*. We see the connection between *śiṣṭa* and *dharmapramāṇa* for the first time in Baudhāyana (1.1.5–6) and Vasiṣṭha (1.6). It is at about the same time that Patañjali uses the term with reference to individuals who have a natural ability to speak correct Sanskrit. Both in grammar and in *dharma*, then, *śiṣṭas* come to be viewed as individuals setting the standard and whom others should look up to if they want to learn correct Sanskrit and proper *dharma*.

Patañjali's (on Pāṇini 6.3.109; III: 174) definition of *śiṣṭa* includes both the place of their residence, the Āryāvarta, and their conduct (*ācāra*) and livelihood, a conduct that, according to him is found only in Āryāvarta: "[brahmins] who possess just a jarful of grain, who are without greed, who have no detectable motive [for their behavior], and who have reached the highest expertise in some branch of learning within a short period of time" (*alolupā agṛhyamāṇakāraṇāḥ kiṃcid antareṇa kasyāścid vidyāyāḥ pāragāḥ*). Baudhāyana (1.1.5–6) gives a similar but longer definition: "Now, *śiṣṭas* are those who are free from envy and pride, who possess just a jarful of grain, who are without greed, and who are free from hypocrisy, arrogance, greed, folly, and anger."[32]

We find a parallel appeal to the living tradition of authoritative brahmins with reference to a sacred geography in both the *dharma* and the grammatical traditions of around the second century BCE. For Patañjali the living tradition of correct speakers of Sanskrit exists only in the area he calls "Āryāvarta."[33] For Baudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha, writing during or shortly after the time of Patañjali, brahmins living in Āryāvarta provide the paradigm for correct *dharma*. The earlier authors, Āpastamba and Gautama, are ignorant of this geographical concept. Patañjali, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha define this geographical area using what appears to have been a set formula; their descriptions agree almost verbatim: "The region to the east of where the Sarasvatī disappears, west of Kālaka forest, south of the Himalayas, and north of Pāriyātra mountains is the land of the Āryas."

> *kaḥ punar āryāvartaḥ | prāg ādarśāt pratyak kālakavanād dakṣiṇena himavantam uttareṇa pāriyātram.* Patañjali on Pāṇini 2.4.10; 6.3.109.

> *prāgādarśāt pratyak kālakavanād dakṣiṇena himavantam udak pāriyātram etad āryāvartam. BDh* 1.2.9.

> *prāg ādarśāt pratyak kālakavanād udak pāriyātrād dakṣiṇena himavataḥ uttareṇa vindhyasya ... etad āryāvartam ity ācakṣate. VaDh* 1.8–12.

31 See *GDh* 19.3; 28.48, 50.

32 *śiṣṭāḥ khalu vigatamatsarā nirahaṅkārā kumbhīdhānyā alolupā darbhadarpa-lobhamohakrodhavivarjitāḥ*. Baudhāyana also cited this verse: "Cultured people are those who have studied the Veda together with its supplements in accordance with the Law, know how to draw inferences from them, and are able to adduce as proofs express vedic texts." See also *VaDh* 6.43.

33 For an extensive discussion of this, see Deshpande 1993, 1999.

What the sociopolitical impetus for developing the theory of Āryāvarta around the second century BCE remains unclear. It is, however, a common imperative in any kind of demarcation, whether it is geographical as in this case or the formation of canons in the case of religious texts, that drawing boundaries is not merely an act of affirmation (these are in) but also one of exclusion (these are out). A canon is intended as much to exclude *other texts* from being considered religiously authoritative as to assert the authority of the texts included. In most cases canon formation is a political move to exclude groups that favored other texts with different doctrines and practices. Likewise, in demarcating the Āryāvarta as the religiously and linguistically authoritative region the authors must have been attempting to exclude from their authoritative community individuals and groups living in other regions.[34] In this context, we can think of the foreign rulers in the northwestern regions during the last few centuries BCE, or even the Buddhist expansion into those regions. Were there Brahmanical groups in those regions working for or under the influence of foreign rulers or of Buddhist doctrines? What about the expansion into the Deccan? Was the Āryāvarta intended to exercise the hegemony of brahmins living broadly within the Ganga-Yamuna Doab?

We have then two interlocking authoritative sources for *dharma* within the developing scheme presented in the Dharmaśāstras, sources that are not textual but live individuals and communities. These individuals should first pass the test of *śiṣṭa* and second live in the sacred and authoritative region of Āryāvarta.

The appeal to the live testimony of qualified brahmins as a living source of *dharma* is already found in one of the oldest pieces of Dharmaśāstra preserved in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (1.11), which advises the young student who has just graduated: "should there be experienced, qualified, and gentle brahmins devoted to *dharma* who are able to make a judgment in that matter, you should observe how they act in that regard and behave likewise."

Deshpande[35] has shown how in the grammatical tradition the source of authority for correct Sanskrit shifted from the living community of *śiṣṭas* living in Āryāvarta during the time of Patañjali to the dead letter of grammatical texts during later times. Patañjali had direct access to spoken Sanskrit, whereas later grammarians focused on the grammatical texts to derive correct usage. Using the concepts of *lakṣya* (linguistic usage) and *lakṣaṇa* (grammatical rules), Deshpande shows the shift in the gaze of the grammarians from the first (found in Patañjali) to the second (by the time of Bhartṛhari) as linguistic usage independent of grammar became extinct: "What is suggested is that the individuals described as being *lakṣyaikacakṣuṣka* place the final authority in the usage that they know independently of the inherited grammatical system, and are for that reason deemed to be entitled to adjust the rules of grammar to fit to that usage. The second term, *lakṣaṇaikacakṣuṣka*, is taken to refer to those individuals who place the final authority in the inherited rules of grammar, and not in the known usage of the language, which it is felt is no longer independent of the received rules of grammar" (Deshpande forthcoming-b, 7).

[34] On the connection between *ārya*, *āryāvarta*, and the politics of exclusion, as well as the demarcation of sacred geographies by other religious traditions, such as Buddhism and Jainism, see Deshpande 1999 and chapter 9 of this volume.

[35] See Deshpande 1993, forthcoming-a, and forthcoming-b. In a personal communication, Deshpande elaborates that even in the grammatical tradition, in spite of the extreme ideological stance found in authors such as Nāgeśa, post-Pāṇinian grammarians found ways to accommodate later linguistic changes into their grammars through a variety of strategies. In this, their work is similar to that of the later Dharmaśāstric commentators, who had to both maintain the immutable authority of the early Dharmaśāstras and incorporate the changing practices and mores into their presentations.

A similar, though not as radical, shift happened in the Dharmaśāstric tradition, especially with regard to the category of *smṛti*. The term is used by Gautama: *tadvidāṃ ca smṛtiśīle* ("And the tradition/memory and practice of those who know it [the Veda]; *GDh* 1.2), where the reference is clearly to the memory and tradition of those who know the Veda, the kind of community later called *śiṣṭa*. In simple terms, one can go to a person from this community and ask "How do you perform the Upanayana?" And he would reply "This is how we do it." That would be *dharma*, correct behavior pattern and ritual procedure, for other people. One could also watch their behavior (*śīla*), and imitate their example (see the passage of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* cited above). This living tradition encompassed by the term *smṛti* is gradually replaced by textualized versions containing rules of correct behavior and ritual practice. When Baudhāyana (*BDh* 1.1.3) says *smārto dvitīyaḥ* ("What is given in tradition is the second"), *smārta* most likely means norms found in textual sources, given that, unlike Gautama, he fails to state whose *smṛti* it is, in sharp contrast to his third source *śiṣṭāgama* (*BDh* 1.1.4), where the source is not just any *āgama* but that of the *śiṣṭas*. Likewise, the last of the Dharmasūtrakāras, Vasiṣṭha (*VaDh* 1.4), makes the simple statement *śrutismṛtivihito dharmaḥ* ("*Dharma* is set forth in *śruti* and *smṛti*"), thus making *smṛti* parallel to *śruti* or the Veda, both textualized forms of religious norms. By the time of Manu *smṛti* had come to be equated with Dharmaśāstra as such, so that Manu can simply declare: *dharmaśāstraṃ tu vai smṛtiḥ* ("Smṛti, however, is Dharmaśāstra; *MDh* 2.10). Whereas the earlier authors see *smṛti* as external to the *śāstra* on *dharma*, indeed an external source from which the *śāstra* derives its norms, for Manu the *śāstra* itself is *smṛti* and thus the authoritative font of *dharma*. Even though Manu speaks of other sources (*mūla*) of *dharma*, yet the two textual forms represented by Veda and Dharmaśāstra are at the forefront. Recourse to other sources are legitimate only when these two fail to address an issue, as explicitly stated by Vasiṣṭha (1.4–5): "The Law is set forth in *śruti* and *smṛti*. When these do not address an issue, the practice of *śiṣṭas* becomes authoritative" (*śrutismṛtivihito dharmaḥ / tadalābhe śiṣṭācāraḥ pramāṇam*).

Unlike Sanskrit grammar, however, Dharmaśāstra could not simply dismiss the living tradition, because *dharma* as the rules of correct living, correct social interaction, and correct governance was a living and, therefore, changing reality. The reality of *dharma* was akin not to the book-learned Sanskrit but to the natural, living, and evolving languages of ancient India represented by the Prākṛts. Dharmaśāstras continued to maintain the authority of the *dharma* of families, castes, villages, regions, and groups for members of these communities. Kings and judges are advised to make careful note of the divergent norms of various groups before passing judgment. The broad nature of *dharma* even in later Dharmaśāstric discourse is evidenced by the fact that royal edicts are also considered *dharma*. So Manu (7.13) advises people: "When the king issues a Law favorable to those he favors or unfavorable to those out of favor,

therefore, no one should transgress that Law." Kātyāyana (670) is even more explicit about the right of the king to promulgate *dharma*: "The man who does not follow the *dharmas* promulgated by the king should be censured and punished, as he has violated the king's edit."

So, in spite of the textualization of the tradition and the theologizing of the sources of *dharma* under the influence of Mīmāṃsā, Dharmaśāstra to some degree remained rooted in the lived reality of communities. In this sense, the judgment of Lariviere and Wezler that *dharma* is nothing but a codification of custom remained true throughout the history of Dharmaśāstra, even though this rootedness in living communities is often camouflaged by the theological rhetoric.[36]

DEVELOPMENTS IN ŚĀSTRIC PRODUCTION

Śāstric production continued during the last three centuries of the last millennium BCE and the early centuries of the Common Era. How extensive this production was is impossible to estimate, because, as is usual in the case of ancient India, only a few of the Dharmaśāstric texts produced during that period have survived. But the citations of other works in the extant literature and the vast body of Dharmaśāstric material incorporated in the great epic *Mahābhārata* clearly point to a vibrant scholarly tradition of textual production. My intention here is not to discuss in detail the history of that textual production but merely to point out certain central elements, both formal and substantive, within that history.

The most significant formal change in the textual production is the gradual change from *sūtra*-style prose to metrical composition principally in *śloka* verse. As I have shown elsewhere (Olivelle 2000, 6–7), the early texts, although written in prose, contain numerous verse citations given as proof texts in support of positions advocated in the prose exposition.[37] In the eyes of the authors, these verses appear to have greater authority than their own composition. This is an old practice already recorded in the early Upaniṣads. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, for example, frequently cites supporting verses with the introduction *tad eṣa śloko bhavati* ("In this connection there is this verse").[38] The significance of these verses in the eyes of the authors is indicated by the fact that they write commentaries on some of them, as in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 1.5.

In the later Dharmasūtras, however, we find increasing use of verses not simply as citations but integrated into the composition. This strategy is used with increasing frequency by Vasiṣṭha, the author of the latest Dharmasūtra; chapters 25–27, for example, are entirely in verse. The following table gives the percentages of verses (both

[36] For a more detailed and nuanced discussion of the relationship of *śāstra* to actual practice (*prayoga*) in a variety of intellectual domains, see Pollock 1989 and Olivelle 2004a, 62–66.

[37] The only text not to have such verses is the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*. This is probably due to the fact that the author has attempted to write a texts in an artificial manner completely in the *sūtra* style, rather than to its early date. On this see Olivelle 2000: 8.

[38] See 2.2.3; 4.3.11; 4.4.6, 7, 8. See also *ChU*, 3.11.2; 5.2.9; 5.10.9; 5.24.5; 7.26.2; 8.6.6.

cited and as part of the composition) in the three Dharmasūtras:

TABLE 7.1

	Total Sūtras	*Total Verses*		*Non-Quote Verses*	
	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Āpastamba	1364	30	2	5	0.4
Baudhāyana	1236	279	22	176	14
Vasiṣṭha	1038	288	28	155	15

It appears that during the last few centuries prior to the common era *ślokas* had assumed an aura of authority, and proverbial wisdom was transmitted as memorable verses.[39] The logical outcome of this tendency was for authoritative texts themselves to be composed in verse, lending authority to the text by its very literary genre. We see this already in some of the earliest Buddhist texts, such as the anthologies of the *Suttanipāta* and the *Dhammapada* and in the verses of the *Jātakas*. The same process was probably responsible for the fact that the early prose Upaniṣads, such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya*, are followed by a series of Upaniṣads composed entirely in verse, such as the *Kaṭha*, the *Muṇḍaka*, and the *Śvetāśvatara*.

The parallel between the older and the later Upaniṣads is true of the *dharma* literature as well. Whereas the earlier texts are in prose with verse citations, the later ones are composed entirely in verse. The first such text was that of Manu. His use of verse for the composition of his Dharmaśāstra, therefore, must have been part of a deliberate plan to lend the kind of authority to his text that would come only through this literary genre. We have, of course, the parallel examples of the epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* composed in verse and claiming religious authority. This move away from prose to verse continues especially in religious compositions such as the Purāṇas. In what could be regarded as expert traditions, however, the picture is mixed. The *artha* and *kāma* traditions continued to produce prose works, as did the ritual, philosophical, and grammatical traditions. The *dharma* tradition followed the trail blazed by Manu; all later Dharmaśāstras are written in verse, prose entering the tradition only in commentaries and medieval digests (*nibandha*).

At the substantive level, the greatest change in the content of the Dharmaśāstras was the incorporation of matters relating to the king, the state, and the judiciary (an area I will call *artha* for the sake of convenience). These matters, we must assume, were the object of a separate expert tradition that also produced *śāstras*. Unfortunately, the early textual production of the *artha* tradition has been almost completely lost, with the single exception of the *Arthaśāstra* ascribed to Kauṭilya.[40]

[39] We find this also in Patañjali as exemplified in the verse cited above on the obligation of a younger person to rise when an older person approaches.

[40] Indeed, it may well have been that the very incorporation of *artha* material in the Dharmaśāstras and the ensuing demise of a separate expert tradition devoted solely to *artha*, may have contributed to the disappearance of *artha* texts. Even the extant

It is likely that the early exponents of Dharmaśāstra already conceived of *dharma* broadly enough to include the running of society—the duties of the king and administrative officers, as well as the judiciary—as part of *dharma*. Indeed, as I have shown elsewhere (Olivelle 2004d and forthcoming-a), in the middle vedic period the term *dharma* was most frequently associated with the duties of the king to maintain social order and justice. Yet, the treatment of *artha* in the early Dharmasūtras is spotty at best, indicating that the authors were not particularly concerned about this area. In their treatment of *artha*, moreover, they focus principally on the duties of the king, such as the protection of the subjects, suppression of crime, and equitable taxation, rather than on the technical matters relating to the affairs of the courts of law and to judicial procedure.

The earliest Dharmasūtra, that of Āpastamba, devotes a total of seventy-three *sūtras* to the duties of the king, under which he also includes crimes and punishment, topics that are later included within judicial procedure (*vyavahāra*).[41] Āpastamba has little to say, however, about judicial procedure, devoting just six sūtras: two dealing with the judges and four with witnesses. Even though Baudhāyana is considerably later than Āpastamba, he also has little to say on *artha*, devoting just twenty-six sūtras to the king and ten to witnesses. Baudhāyana's text has undergone repeated emendation and corruption, so it is impossible to estimate what the original state of the text would have been. The texts of both Āpastamba and Baudhāyana, however, have come down as part of a larger complex, the Kalpasūtra, containing both the Śrauta- and the Gṛhya-sūtras of these schools. Their close connection to the respective Vedic *śākhās* may have had something to do with their attitude toward matters of *artha*.

The text of Gautama is the earliest to have been composed as an independent treatise. It is also the text that shows greatest connection to the *artha* tradition. Gautama devotes fifty-two *sūtras* to the king and state and a further 109 to judicial procedure. As can be seen in table 7.2, Gautama devotes a comparatively larger segment of his book to affairs of state, a tradition that will be continued in later Dharmaśāstric literature. Although not as large as the section on *artha* of Gautama, Vasiṣṭha also incorporates *artha* material far more extensively than his predecessors. He devotes fifty-six *sūtras* to the king and state and thirty-seven to judicial procedure.

Arthaśāstra was discovered only in the twentieth century, and very few manuscripts of this work are in existence.

[41] By contrast, Āpastamba devotes 119 *sūtras* to the single and, from a broader societal point of view, narrower subject of a brahmin's annual course of vedic study and ninety-nine *sūtras* to the times when such recitation has to be suspended.

TABLE 7.2

	On King	*On Court*	*Total on artha*	*% of Text*
Āpastamba	73	6	79	5.8
Baudhāyana	26	10	36	2.9
Vasiṣṭha	56	37	93	9
Gautama	52	109	161	16.1
Manu	300	251	551	20.5

Gautama's discussion of judicial procedure (*vyavahāra*) is not simply long; it also covers a larger number of topics: theft, abuse, assault, property damage, rates of interest, ownership, debts, and witnesses. I have dealt elsewhere (Olivelle forthcoming-b) with the close connection between the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* and the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra*. This connection extends also to their treatment of the king and judicial procedure. Manu, however, represents a watershed in the development of Dharmaśāstra, not only because of his exclusive use of verse and his placing the entire discourse in the mouth of the creator god himself but also because he integrated to an extent not seen before material from the *artha* tradition bearing on king, state, and judicial procedure.[42] The most obvious borrowing is Manu's adoption of the eighteen *vyavahārapadas*, or Grounds for Litigation (often called Titles of Law). Some of these grounds for bringing a lawsuit are given in the earlier literature, but never in such a systematic manner; neither are they called by the technical term *vyavahārapada*. According to Manu, a plaintiff when bringing a case before a tribunal has to indicate the exact *vyavahārapada* under which he is filing the suit. The significance of this topic for Manu is indicated by the fact that he devotes 251 verses or 9.3 percent of his entire book to it, and it covers two entire chapters (8–9) of the twelve-chapter work.

Another telling example is the technical term *sāhasa*. This term is used by Manu, the *Arthaśāstra*, and all later authors of Dharmaśāstras with reference to a set of three levels of fines imposed on most common crimes. The lowest is called *pūrvasāhasa* (or *prathamasāhasa*), generally 250 Paṇas; the middle (*madhyamasāhasa*) is 500 Paṇas; and the highest (*uttamasāhasa*) is 1,000 Paṇas.[43] This system was, in all likelihood, created within the *artha* tradition; both for śāstric purposes and for the actual administration of justice the experts in this tradition must have found it easy to settle on three levels of punishment for crimes. This meaning of *sāhasa*, or any system of fines, is absent in the Dharmasūtras.[44]

The incorporation of judicial procedure into the framework of Dharmaśāstra

[42] On Manu's connection to the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, see Olivelle 2004c.

[43] See *MDh* 8.138. According to *YDh* 1.366, the highest fine is 1,080, the middle half that, and the lowest half the middle. The *Arthaśāstra* (3.17.8–10) gives a range from 48 to 96 for the lowest, 200 to 500 for the middle, and 500 to 1,000 for the highest.

[44] The term *sāhasa* is found once in the *ĀpDh* (2.13.7) and once in the *GDh* (1.3) with the simple meaning of violence.

culminates in Yājñavalkya, who divides his treatise into three sections: *ācārakāṇḍa*, *vyavahārakāṇḍā*, and *prāyaścittakāṇḍa*. Thus *vyavahāra* becomes a self-contained section of the literature on *dharma*, so much so that works dealing solely with *vyavahāra* (works that today we would call "monographs") come to be composed toward the middle of the first millennium CE. The only extant work of this type is that of Nārada, although, judging by the extant citation from their works, the *śāstras* of Kātyāyana and Bṛhaspati also appear to have been devoted solely to *vyavahāra*.

CONCLUSION

The missing ingredient in all the "histories" of Dharmaśāstra is the historical, social, political, and economic contexts of the early textual production in this tradition. As Pollock (1985, 1990) has shown, Brahmanical writings, especially those, such as Dharmaśāstras, produced under the influence of Mīmāṃsā, deliberately exclude all references to the lived reality of their authors, to the social, religious, political, and economic conditions in which they lived and wrote. It is a mistake, however, for the modern scholar and historian to assume that such lack of reference means that these texts were produced in a social vacuum; the lack of reference should be recognized for what it is, a theological viewpoint or ploy to make their work seem eternal and transcending social and historical contexts. The task of the historian is to raise this theological veil to see under and behind it and to uncover the real historical conditions in which these texts were produced.

Now this is a difficult enterprise, given the notoriously difficult task of locating these texts in space and time and the incomplete picture we have of Indian history "between the empires," between the Mauryas and the Guptas. Yet, this is the task we as cultural historians must undertake in attempting to understand the rich tradition of Dharmaśāstra.

This essay is but a modest contribution to that enterprise. I think the influence of Buddhism the Brahmanical textual production during this period has long been underestimated. Recently, the work of Hiltebeitel and Fitzgerald, both contributors to this volume, have thrown light on the historical underpinnings of the great epic, *Mahābhārata*, seeing the epic as one answer to the challenges posed by the new religions and the Aśokan reforms. A fresh look at the early history of Dharmaśāstric texts will show similar historical underpinnings, as I have tried to show in my recent critical edition of the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra*.[45]

[45] See Olivelle 2004a, pp. 18–25, 37–41.

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8

Women "Between the Empires" and "Between the Lines"

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In a field in which affixing a date to a text or a concept (even a vague date spanning several centuries) is an act of daring, I want first to congratulate the organizers of this conference for inviting, indeed forcing, the participants to commit collective scholarly hubris. I am not exactly sure how to define the territory "between the empires" for the topic I am pursuing here—women's history—especially since women's history at the best of times exists, as I've said elsewhere, "between the lines." But I have chosen to concentrate on *dharma* texts and texts that reflect and complement them, namely the *Arthaśāstra* and even the *Kāma Sūtra*, and to explore what is different (and/or new) about the portrayal of women in the Dharmaśāstras, as represented by *Manu*, in contrast to the earlier Dharmasūtras. By most estimates *Manu* belongs "between the empires," whereas the *sūtras*, growing out of the Vedic schools, have their feet at least conceptually in an earlier period. In examining this question I will be following Patrick Olivelle's (new) relative dating of the Dharmasūtras,[1] and indeed arguing for its correctness on the basis of my own data.

Before beginning I should first anticipate and answer certain objections that are sure to be raised. If I claim to see differences in the portrayal of women in the Dharmasūtras and Dharmaśāstras, to trace development from one to the other, it can be quite legitimately objected that it is not the "real" treatment of women that has changed, but rather the type of text—that for the *sūtras*, as offshoots of Vedic schools, the preoccupation is simply the *dharma* of a male brahmin following a traditional Vedic way of life, and women are essentially invisible to these texts, except as they impact the life of the brahmin male. Whereas *Manu* and the later Dharmaśāstras have a more totalizing project, and therefore different kinds of information get incorporated—the purview is rather wider, though of course the brahmin male is still the central theme.

I cede entirely to these objections. I would certainly not claim that either type of text can be read as a straightforward representation of social conditions in its period. But the fact remains that what texts choose to include, or exclude, is in itself interesting and gives indirect but telling evidence about certain social attitudes and facts.

[1] See Olivelle 2000: 4–10, with the relative dating *Āpastambha, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha.*

That said, let us turn to matters of substance. I see several major trends in the portrayal of women in the progression of *dharma* texts. First and most important—for the other differences arise from this, I think—is a growing tendency to attribute agency, especially mental agency, to women. By this I do *not* mean that they are necessarily granted freedom to act independently, rather that there is growing recognition in the *dharma* texts that women have the capacity and often the desire to act independently. This is not always welcome news, and it generates various reactions.

One of these is an attempt to control and rein in this capacity. Another is reflected in the moralizing view of women found in the later *dharma* texts, dichotomizing the sex into virtuous wives worthy of honor and scheming, sex-crazed hussies. There is a certain whiff of Victoriana in *Manu*'s schizophrenic attitudes toward women, while the earlier *sūtras* seem to view them as morally neutral (and indeed not terribly interesting from a moral point of view). I will claim that the rise of overt misogyny is closely tied to the first tendency, the recognition of women as potential agents. Let us begin with that question.

According to Olivelle, the *Āpastambha* is the earliest of the extant *sūtras*. Its portrayal of women certainly supports this view, for women there fit almost entirely into the older *śrauta* ritual model which I have treated elsewhere (Jamison 1996, especially sections II and III): wife as ritual partner and therefore one-half of a corporate household unit. On first glance, this makes the text seem relatively "enlightened" (if we are grading texts on this basis), for the text seems to grant women more control than later texts—but, it turns out, always in the context of the household pair. So the woman has, as it were, joint tenancy in that unit, but is entirely subsumed within it.

Let us examine some passages that both seem to grant the wife agency but also confine that agency to her presence in the couple. The first passage concerns the duty of the household pair to gives alms (later a particular duty of the wife).

> *kāle svāmināv annārthinaṃ na pratyācakṣīyātām* || *ĀpDh* II.4.13
>
> The "two masters" should not refuse anyone seeking food at the proper time.

Olivelle translates[2] *svāminau* as "the master and mistress," which is of course its intent, but notes that the Sanskrit gives only a pregnant dual masculine.

Joint control over property, not merely food, is stated without ambiguity several times later in the text.

> *kuṭumbhinau dhanasyeśātel tayor anumate 'nye 'pi taddhiteṣv varteran* || *ĀpDh* II.29.3–4
>
> The **household couple** (together) has dominion over the property. With the approval of those two others may also deal with it, to their benefit.[3]

Here again we have the pregnant masculine dual. But in the most explicit statement of this joint ownership, in a section on inheritance, the two partners are denominated separately, and the rationale—their *ritual partnership*—is given for joint control.

> *jāyāpatyor na vibhāgo vidyate* | *pāṇigrahaṇād dhi sahatvaṃ karmasu* | *tathā puṇyaphaleṣu* | *dravyaparigraheṣu ca* || *ĀpDh* II.14.16–19
>
> There is no division (of property) **between wife and husband.** For from their marriage there is togetherness in ritual acts, likewise in the fruits of good deeds, and in the acquisition of property.

Because of this joint tenancy the wife is granted the power to dispose of the property by independent action when her husband is unavailable, though only under strict guidelines and with a bit of nervous special pleading. This power is given rather grudgingly in the immediately following clause.

> *na hi bhartur vipravāse naimittike dāne steyam upadiśanti* || *ĀpDh* II.14.20
>
> For when in the absence of her husband the occasion for a special gift (arises), they don't call it theft [if she makes the gift].

This ritual partnership, what I just called the *śrauta* model, is also cited as the reason why the wife cannot be superseded. As long as she fulfills her duties, to participate in ritual (or dharmic activity) and to bear children (*dharmaprajāsampanne dāre*; *ĀpDh* II.11.12), the husband cannot take another wife, and indeed it is rather confusingly said that if she fails in either capacity (II.11.3: *anyatarābhāve*) he can only take another wife *before* the establishment of his sacred fires (*prāg agnyādheyāt*).[4] The wife's claim to

[2] All translations of the Dharmasūtras credited to Olivelle are taken from Olivelle 2000; all credited to Bühler from Bühler 1879, 1882.

[3] Another passage seems to assign partial control over inheritance to the wife in her role in the pair, at least in Olivelle's interpretation. *ĀpDh* II.13.1 introduces sons born to a man and his properly wedded wife and the rights of these sons. Immediately thereafter it is said—*ĀpDh* II.13.2 *dāyenāvyatikramaś cobhayoḥ*—in Olivelle's interpretation "and neither parent may deprive such a son of his share in the estate." Bühler's interpretation, following Haradatta, is quite different: "if they do not sin against either (of their parents)." See Olivelle's note and Bühler ad loc. It must be admitted that the text is not straightforward, and Bühler recognizes that either interpretation is possible. The term *vyatikrama-*, however, may favor Bühler's interpretation, as it ordinarily means "transgress against, be unfaithful to." See discussion below, n. 11.

[4] The confusion arises if we interpret *dharma-* in the compound in *ĀpDh* II.11.12 as referring to ritual action, as it often does in contexts like this. So Olivelle ("religious rites"). In that case, according to II.11.13, it would seem that the husband could replace his wife on the grounds of nonparticipation in ritual before his (*śrauta*) ritual life actually began, i.e., before he established his fires. Perhaps it refers more generally to

unique legitimacy on the basis of her ritual role is stated very firmly in the immediately following clause:

> *ādhāne hi satī karmabhiḥ saṃbadhyate yeṣām etad aṅgam* || *ĀpDh* II.11.14
>
> For at the Establishment of the Fires the wife becomes bound together with the rituals of which this is a part.

In later texts (*BDh* II.4.6, *MDh* IX.77ff.) a wife can be superseded or abandoned for failure to bear children (or live males), but neglect of her ritual role is not mentioned as a pretext. Instead the spotlight has shifted to defects in her individual personal qualities—her temper and her vices—and away from the wife as faceless function in the mechanics of the ritual system. *Baudhāyana* sets long periods (ten to fifteen years) for discarding a wife unsatisfactory in the production of offspring, but allows her to be abandoned immediately if she is habitually talks unpleasantly (*sadyas tv apriyavādinīm BDh* II.4.6, likewise *MDh* IX.81); *Vasiṣṭha* enjoins the abandonment of wives (as well as sons and pupils) who engage in sinful acts, if reprimanding them doesn't work (*VaDh* XIII.49). *Manu* exuberantly names a number of unpleasant characteristics as ground for immediate supersession, though reproductive problems still require years (*MDh* IX.81).

> *madyapāsatyavṛttā ca pratikūlā ca yā bhavet* |
> *vyādhitā cādhivettavyā hiṃsrārthaghnī ca sarvadā* || *MDh* XI.80
>
> A woman who's a drinker, of dishonest behavior, contrary, sickly, destructive, extravagant, can be superseded at any time.[5]

The inseparable nature of the household pair-bond in *Āpastambha* is also implied by a small detail. In II.9.11 it is said that a man may deprive himself, his wife, or his son of food at will, though not servants or workers. In *Vasiṣṭha* XIV.13, however, a man is allowed to accept a gift of food from anyone to save his wife (*dāram ujjihīrṣan*), but not for himself (*na tu tṛpyet svayam*). The change may have less to do with a more compassionate and caring husband/wife relationship than with the loss of *identity* between husband and wife. In *Āpastambha* the two are so unified that fasting for one is equivalent to fasting for the other, whereas by the time of *Vasiṣṭha* the woman is viewed as a separate individual, for better or worse.

I have treated the evidence from *Āpastambha* at some length because it differs so strikingly (once the scattered passages are assembled) from the later *dharma* tradition. On the one hand, references to the wife's ritual role and the household partnership engendered by it become rare and muted in the later texts. I will give what little evidence there is of it. *Gautama*'s term for marriage (mentioned among the forty *saṃskāras*, *GDh* VIII.16) is *sahadharmacāriṇīsaṃyogaḥ* "joining oneself with a 'joint-*dharma*-practicer'," (see n. 4), so verbally at least the ritual partnership is highlighted in that passage. In the section concerning sacrifices in *Baudhāyana*, the wife receives a few glancing mentions (*BDh* I.13.5; 15.17, 26), and at *BDh* I.21.2 a woman "bought for money" (*krītā dravyeṇa*) is not legally considered a wife (*patnī*) and cannot participate in rites to the gods or ancestors (*sā na daive na sā pitrye*). *Vasiṣṭha* excludes a particular adulterous woman from "ritual/dharmic activities" (*VaDh* XXI.9 *dharmebhyas tu nivartate*), and the notion arising from their ritual partnership that the wife is half of oneself (cf. Jamison 1996: 30–31) is also obliquely found in a provision in *Vasiṣṭha* that half of one's own body "falls" from caste when his wife drinks *surā* (*VaDh* XXI.15 *pataty ardhaṃ śarīrasya yasya bhāryā surāṃ pibet*). But none of these later references to the ritual wife serves as a basis for extending rights over property or activity to the woman, as they do in *Āpastambha*.

On the other hand, *Āpastambha* has almost no evidence that women were endowed with *independent agency* outside of her participation in the ritual pair. What kind of evidence might we seek? As it turns out, the best evidence in the later *dharma* tradition for independent action on the part of women comes from their bad behavior, and how this behavior is characterized and punished. But before examining the evidence for this, let us look at one passage in *Āpastambha* which might suggest that women have independent desires. In the rules regulating the required times for sex, *Āpastambha* seems to allow further occasions for intercourse "if his wife wants it" (Olivelle), "if his wife (desires it)" (Bühler). But it must be admitted that the text is hardly clear on this point, consisting simply of a locative referring to the wife: *ĀpDh* II.18 *antarāle 'pi dāra eva*.

The rules concerning sexual misconduct and its punishment (*ĀpDh* II.26.18–27.13) are telling, especially in contrast to the later texts. Several different levels of offense are defined for the male (depending on the degree of sexual contact [II.26.18-21, 27.12–13] and the relative *varṇa* affiliations [II.27.8–11] of man and woman). In fact, the provisions are entirely phrased in terms of the man; the participation of the woman, willing or unwilling, goes unnoted—to the extent that the treatment of the woman and the possible punishment meted out to her is textually confused. An undefined feminine dual (presumably married woman and virgin,[6] the latter mentioned in 21 [*kumāryām*]), presumably after the sexual encounter, are put under the protection of the king, who is to guard them from sex henceforth (22 *atha bhṛtye rājñā* 23 *rakṣye cāta ūrdhvaṃ maithunāt*). But if they undertake a penance, the

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rituals of a *gṛhya* nature, or more generally still to *dharma* in the broadest sense, leading the proper life (so, perhaps, Bühler: "religious duties"). In any case, we are reminded of the Prājāpatya form of marriage, defined by several *dharma* texts (*MDh* III.30, *YDh* I.60, *GDh* IV.7, *BDh* I.20.3, *ĀśG* I.6.3) by the *mantra* pronounced at the ceremony: *sahobhau caratāṃ dharmam* "Together do ye both practice *dharma*," as well as of the term *sahadharmacarinī-cāriṇī* "joint-*dharma*-practicing," which seems to be a byword for an observant wife of whatever type (common in the epics, e.g., *MBh* I.145.31; I.App. I, No. 100.98; XII. App. 19.129, 136; XIII.134.7, 32, and see also *GDh* VIII.16 cited in the body of the text). For further discussion see Jamison 1996: 217–218.

[5] *Manu* gives a woman who hates (*dviṣāṇām*) her husband groundlessly a year before ill consequences (*MDh* IX.77), but if she has grounds the punishment is less severe (IX.78–79). For more on hating, see below.

[6] Explicitly supplied by Bühler "(married women and damsels)."

king returns them to their masters (*nirveṣābhyupāye tu svāmibhyo 'vasjet*).[7] The protection of the king seems to imply that they are innocent victims (of rape, vel sim.),[8] but the penance that they have some bad conduct to expiate. The text seems unwilling to clarify this issue, and that is perhaps the point—whether the women participated willingly or not, the crime is defined as a man's crime against another man (the *svāmin*)[9] and the attitude of the woman is irrelevant.

Only in two places in *Āpastambha* can I find agency explicitly attributed to a woman to act badly.[10] In I.28.20 a woman who has "transgressed against her husband" (*bhartuvyatikrame*), a clear reference to adultery,[11] must perform the *kṛcchra* penance. Similarly, a student must suspend Vedic recitation if he exchanges glances with *varṇavyatikrāntāyāṃ maithune* "a woman who has transgressed against *varṇa* in sexual behavior" (*ĀpDh* I.9.12). In both cases it seems clear that it is the woman who has

[7] Both Bühler and Olivelle interpret the compound *nirveṣābhyupāye* as indicating the *willingness* of the woman to perform the penance (both translate the *-upāye* as "if they agree"), thus suggesting agency on the part of the woman, but the lexeme should only mean "undergo, undertake, enter upon," without implying mental assent.

[8] Though the use of the root √*rakṣ* here may connect the king's protection with the "guarding" of women by their husbands, which often presupposes a propensity in women toward sexual misbehavior. See discussion below.

[9] Once the woman has performed the penance, everything is supposed to return to normal, *dharmād dhi saṃbandhaḥ* "for their relationship exists from *dharma*," another instance of the importance of the ritual pair-bond in this text.

[10] There is, possibly, a third, but it occurs in the context of the woman's control over almsfood, an aspect of her membership in the household pair, as we saw above (II.4.13). In *Āpastambha* I.3.26 when women refuse (*strīṇām pratyācakṣāṇām*) to give food to a begging student he appropriates whatever has been "sacrificed, given, offered as oblation, (as well as) offspring, cattle, studious piety, and food" (*iṣṭaṃ dattaṃ hutaṃ prajāṃ paśūn brahmacāryam annādyam*). Notice that what is taken is, first, the ritual products of the marital partnership, then the material products again belonging to both partners. The woman who refuses is thus acting within her role in the partnership, not independently.

[11] Both Olivelle and Bühler interpret *-vyatikrama-* as *leaving* the husband (Olivelle "abandon," Bühler "forsake"). But *vy-ati* √*kram* has a more general meaning "transgress, violate" (derived easily from its literal meaning), as in *dharma-vyatikrama-* (*ĀpDh* II.13.7, *GDh* I.1.3) "transgression of the Law." At II.27.6 when the virtual adultery of levirate is forbidden, the term is *vyatikrame*, and at *BDh* II.3.48 where it is again a question of the *vyatikrama* by a woman (and where the same *kṛcchra* penance is imposed), Olivelle interprets "if the woman is unfaithful"—quite appropriately, since the *varṇas* of her adulterous partners are specified immediately after. (Bühler, more delicately, "a violation [of their duty toward the husband].") In any case, in later texts when a woman leaves her husband the term is √*tyaj* (e.g., *BDh* II.3.27, cf. *AŚ* III.2.48), *ut* √*sṛj* (*VaDh* XVII.19), √*hā* (*MDh* V.16.3), not *vy-ati* √*kram*.

It is noteworthy that this provision immediately follows one describing the imaginative penance of a husband guilty of the same offense against his wife (I.28.19 *dāravyatikramī* . . .), so there is reciprocity. Indeed in the section on sexual offenses (here dealing with the levirate) "violation" (*vyatikrama-*) condemns both husband and wife to hell (II.27.6 . . . *ubhayor narakaḥ*), reminding us again of the indivisibility of the household pair for *Āpastambha*.

performed the *vy-ati* √*kram*[12] and thus participated actively in the adultery. But in the section devoted to adultery, when the same cross-*varṇa* pairing is mentioned, the wife is object not subject, even though a punishment is imposed on her.

> *vadhyaḥ śūdra āryāyām | dāram cāsya karśayet* || *ĀpDh* II.27.9–10
>
> A śūdra (who has sex) with an Āryan lady should be killed, and he [= her husband, presumably] should emaciate[13] his wife.

Again we see a reluctance to attribute agency to the woman, despite her obvious participation.

It is instructive to compare these provisions of *Āpastambha* with later treatments of sexual misconduct. In the later texts a much more nuanced typology of such crimes is developed, especially with regard to the woman involved. In addition to the relative *varṇa* affiliations of the participants (which already figured in *Āpastambha*), the law takes into account whether the woman was "guarded" or not, and, even more important, whether she was a willing participant or coerced by force. The emphasis on the state of mind of the female brings in its train the imposition of more serious penalties on willing females than the simple penance of *Āpastambha*.

The rather laconic *Gautama Dharma Sūtra* does not yet explicitly consider the state of the woman's mind, but it does impose a more severe penalty on a śūdra man who has sex with an Aryan woman who has a guardian (*goptā*) than one who does not (*GDh* XII.2–3).[14] Moreover, we meet an array of questionable women who don't seem to have been part of *Āpastambha*'s worldview: the married woman who has a lover (*upapati*, lit. "additional" or "subordinate" husband): neither the lover nor the husband who allows this are fit to be invited to a Śrāddha meal (XV.17);[15] the whore

[12] Though I'm disturbed by the past passive participle in I.9.12: does it mean rather "one who has *been violated* across *varṇa* boundaries"?

Another mention of sexual misconduct in women is found in I.19.14, where the food of an "unchaste woman" (*kulaṭā-*) is forbidden.

[13] "Emaciate" surely refers to the imposition of the *kṛcchra* penance, which, as we saw, is the expiation for a woman's "transgression" in I.28.20. Since this penance involves abstention from food in a specified pattern (cf. *ĀpDh* I.27.7), the verb *karśaya-* makes sense.

[14] A woman who has committed adultery seems also to be put into a guarded state after the fact, at least if Olivelle's interpretation of *GDh* XXII.35 is correct:

strī cāticāriṇī guptā piṇḍaṃ tu labheta || *GDh* XXII.35

[Olivelle:] "And a woman who goes against her husband [should observe chastity for a year (cf. previous provisions)]. She should be kept under watch, however, and receive food."

Bühler's interpretation is more ambiguous ("but being guarded she should receive food") but seems to imply that she was in a guarded state when she committed the offense as well as later. I do not see a clear way to decide.

[15] The woman with a lover and her husband who countenances it are a stock trio in the later *dharma* literature as well. See *VaDh* XIV.6, *MDh* III.155, IV.216–217. A similar situation may be referred to in a passage in the *Arthaśāstra*, though it doesn't use the term *upapati-*. In *AŚ* IV.12.30–33 a woman who has been unfaithful while her husband is

(*puṃścalī*) whose food should not be eaten (XVII.17)[16]; the "wanton (/flighty?) woman, brahmin only in name" (*brahmabandhū- calanā-*), whose killing can be expiated merely by the gift of a (leather?) bag (*jīla*) (XXII.26),[17] and the woman who falls from caste because of a liaison with a lower-class man (*hīnavarṇasevāyām* XXI.9).[18] This last offense (or something very similar) is treated much more severely elsewhere in the text:

> *śvabhir ādayed rājā nihīnavarṇagamane striyam prakāśam* || *GDh* XXIII.14
>
> In the case of a (sexual) encounter with (a man) of lower *varṇa* the king should have the woman eaten by dogs in public.[19]

We should note here not merely the harshness of the punishment but, more important, the fact that this is now a public, not a private matter. The adulterous wife in *Āpastambha* herself performed a penance or her husband imposed it upon her.[20] The matter was dealt with internally, domestically; the woman was, as it were, invisible to the legal system. But here the king has the woman punished directly: she has gained (however unfortunately for the particular woman in question) legal status.

The provisions concerning adultery in *Baudhāyana* are noteworthy in that they are in the first instance stated in terms of the woman, and differ according to the *varṇa* of her lover (II.3.47–50), but the treatment of adultery is otherwise rather limited in this text. *Vasiṣṭha* in contrast has a rich typology, with imaginatively conceived punishments, partly framed in terms of the woman. The first set of provisions concerns men (of various lower *varṇas*) "approaching" (*adhi* √*gam*) a brahmin woman (*VaDh*

away should be restrained by a servant or relation of the husband until he returns. If he is tolerant (*kṣameta*), both (wife and lover) are released; otherwise they are both severely punished.

16 *Vasiṣṭha* also forbids eating food given by a whore (XIV.2), likewise by an *upapati* and the husband who allows him in the house (XIV.6, 11), a courtesan (*gaṇikā* XIV.10), a henpecked husband (*bhāryājita* XIV.11), or an unchaste woman (*kulaṭā* XIV.19).

17 The immediately following provision, *GDh* XXII.27, *vaiśike na kiṃ cit*, is translated by Olivelle "If he kills a prostitute, nothing at all" and by Bühler "(For killing a woman who subsists) by harlotry. . . ." The bare masculine locative *vaiśike* (or instrumental, if we follow *YMt* 3.268, which takes the apparent negative particle rather as the instr. ending *vaiśikena*; see Olivelle's note) does not necessarily impose this interpretation, and I wonder if it refers to killing the "wanton woman" of XXII.26 in an encounter involving sex for money, not merely sex.

18 *Āpastambha* also glancingly refers to "fallen" women in I.28.9, which states one's duty to one's mother, even if she has fallen (see *BDh* II.3.42, *VaDh* XIII.47). But what could have brought about this fall is delicately not stated.

19 See *MDh* VIII.371, where this punishment is reserved for a particularly arrogant adulterous woman.

20 I have to admit that the *Āpastambha* wording (*dāraṃ cāsya karśayet*) is technically ambiguous, since *karśayet* lacks an overt subject. But *dāram* . . . *asya* "his wife" strongly suggests that the husband is meant.

XXI.1–3) or, in 4, any woman of a higher *varṇa*. Though the man is the subject of the verb, the woman the object, both are punished, publicly. The woman in each case is shaved, smeared with ghee, and led naked along the highway on a donkey, whose color is determined by the *varṇa* of her lover, e.g., a black one when he is a śūdra:

> . . . *brāhmaṇyāḥ śirasi vapanaṃ kārayitvā sarpiṣābhyajya nagnāṃ kṛṣṇakharam āropya mahāpatham anusaṃvrājayet* || *VaDh* XXI.1

Again the punishment is public and externally imposed. These scenarios are followed by a series in which the woman is the subject, and most strikingly this begins with a wife who is unfaithful to her husband *only in her mind*: *VaDh* XXI.6 *manasā bhartur aticāre*. I find this passage particularly significant because it attributes to the woman *mental agency*, motivation, intellectual autonomy. It does not require action to make her guilty of transgression. I do not think we have seen this before.[21] (Fortunately for her the penalty is reasonably light, a mildly nasty penance for three days.) The sequence continues through a woman who has a questionable conversation with another man (*vāksaṃbandhā* XXI.7) to actual adultery (*vyavāye* XXI.8), with correspondingly worse penances.

But the typology of adultery becomes distinctly more complex in *Manu*, as compared even to these later Dharmasūtras, for *Manu* introduces the explicit criterion of "willingness" on the part of the woman. First, in his discussion of what constitutes adultery (*saṃgrahaṇa*) the notion of "mutual consent" (*parasparasyānumate MDh* VIII.358) forms a part of the definition. Then the violation ("spoiling") even of a virgin merits different punishment according to whether she is willing (*sakāmā*) or not (*akāmā*) (VIII.364, 368), and whether force is involved (*abhiṣahya*) (VIII.367). Another variable is whether the woman is guarded or unguarded (*guptā/aguptā*; cf. VIII.374–378, 382–385). In one passage the two variables seem to collapse into one, as the unguarded woman seems equated with a willing one when the connection is between brahmins:

> *sahasraṃ brāhmaṇo daṇḍyo guptāṃ viprāṃ balād vrajan* |
> *śatāni pañca daṇḍyaḥ syād icchantyā saha saṃgataḥ* || *MDh* VIII.378
>
> A brahmin should be fined a thousand if he "approaches" a **guarded** brahmin woman **by force**.
> But he should be fined five hundred if he "came together" with a woman who **wanted to**.

The *Arthaśāstra* further develops the category of "willing/unwilling." Compare first *AŚ* IV.12.5–6, which concerns a virgin who has reached puberty (*prāptaphalā*): she can refuse to marry a man who has "made" her (*pra-kurvant-*) if she is unwilling (*akāmā*); if willing, she shares in paying the fine to her own father for her violation.[22] Similarly in

21 We do find a similar provision in *MDh* IX.21 *dhyāyaty aniṣṭaṃ yat kiṃ cit pāṇigrāhasya cetasā* "a woman contemplating with her mind something undesirable to her husband."

22 It is worthy of note that there is no such distinction in case of a virgin violated before puberty (*AŚ* IV.12.1–2), presumably because she cannot be considered capable of

the case of a woman violated by another woman, the fine depends on whether the violated woman was willing or not (*AŚ* IV.12.20–21). A girl can also refuse to marry a man who has substituted himself for the intended bridegroom (IV.12.12–13) and can refuse to stay married to someone who has falsely accused her of not being a virgin at the marriage (IV.12.17–19). A married woman can refuse to have sex with a man who has rescued her from mortal danger (IV.12.36–37, 38–40), and a woman who willingly participates in incest is sentenced to death along with the man (IV.13.30–31). Perhaps the most surprising provisions in the *Arthaśāstra* concern prostitutes, for even a woman in this profession is given legal protection against unwanted sex: "enjoying a prostitute by force" (*rūpājīvāyāḥ prasahyopabhoge*) draws a fine (IV.13.38), which is higher if many men are involved (39). In the section devoted to the Superintendent of Courtesans it is also stated that "restraining an unwilling courtesan" (*gaṇikām akāmāṃ rundhataḥ*, II.27.13) is a finable offense.[23] The particular contents of these miscellaneous provisions are less important than the constant repetition of *sakāmā*/*akāmā* for all sorts of categories of women, including girls who have barely reached puberty. Mental agency is simply an accepted fact about women in this text, and those who exercise this agency in prohibited behavior are duly punished, while those who mentally resisted deserve the protection of the law.

Now the official recognition that women are capable of acting and thinking on their own cannot have been entirely comfortable or welcome (even though, privately and domestically, it can't have been much of a novelty), so that it is not surprising that hand in hand with the growing textual representation of women's agency *in practice* comes the nervous assertion of the *principle* that they lack independence. The famous and widespread doctrine of *(a)svātantryam* "(lack of) independence" becomes more and more prominent. The term is entirely absent from *Āpastambha*, and makes its first brief appearance in *dharma* literature in *Gautama* XVIII.1 *asvatantrā dharme strī* "Woman lacks independence in dharmic activity," where her lack of independence is confined to a single arena. Given the common restriction of the term *dharma* to "ritual activity" (see, e.g., n. 4), it is quite possible that this statement merely refers to the required ritual partnership of husband and wife, though the immediately following clauses have a larger field of behavior in view:

> *nāticared bhartāram* | *vākcakṣuḥkarmasaṃyatā* || *GDh* XVIII.2–3
>
> She should not go against her husband—restrained in her speech, sight, and action.

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giving informed consent—the equivalent of American statutory rape laws as well as laws against sexual abuse of children.

[23] The immediately preceding passage (*AŚ* II.27.13) concerns violence against a girl (*kumāryāḥ . . . sāhase*), again with different punishment depending on whether she's willing or unwilling. It is not clear whether this is *any kumārī* or the courtesan's daughter (*gaṇikā-duhitar-*), though since the provision is found in a section entirely devoted to courtesans, the latter seems the more probable. For the courtesan's daughter as an especially marketable commodity (whose virginity then needs to be guarded), see the long passage in the *Kāma Sūtra* beginning at VII.13.

The doctrine is in full flower by the time of *Baudhāyana* and *Vasiṣṭha*, however. Both texts first state it in prose in broader terms than in *Gautama*:

> *na striyāḥ svātantryaṃ vidyate* || *BDh* II.3.44
>
> Independence for woman does not exist.
>
> *asvatantrā strī puruṣapradhānā* || *VaDh* V.1
>
> Woman lacks independence (and) has Man as her chief thing.

Then both texts[24] quote the tag verse that strongly asserts the same doctrine:

> *pitā rakṣati kaumāre bhartā rakṣati yauvane* |
> *putraś ca sthāvirībhāve*[25] *na strī svātantryam arhati* || *VaDh* V.3
>
> Her father guards (her) in childhood; her husband guards (her) in youth;
> And her son in old age. A woman does not deserve independence.

This verse is repeated almost exactly at *MDh* IX.3[26] (cf. also IX.2), and the same sentiment is versified in three alternative ways at *MDh* V.147–149, with the first two harping on the *svātrantryam* theme:

> *bālayā vā yuvatyā vā vṛddhayā vāpi yoṣitā* |
> *na svātantryeṇa kartavyaṃ kiṃ cit kāryam gṛheṣv api* || *MDh* V.147
>
> *bālye pitur vaśe tiṣṭhet pāṇigrāhasya yauvane* |
> *putrāṇāṃ bhartari prete na bhajeta svantantratām* || V.148
>
> *pitrā bhartrā sutair vāpi necched viraham ātmanaḥ* |
> *eṣāṃ hi viraheṇa strī garhye kuryād ubhe kule* || V.149

The first verse of this sequence is particularly harsh, in denying woman independent action even within her own household (*gṛheṣv api*).

Thus we are confronted with something of a paradox—that the more woman is textually endowed with agency the more her capacity for independence is denied. A paradox indeed, but perhaps a psychologically understandable one. An autonomous woman is a threatening woman, and denial may be the best defense. It is also significant that the verb repeated in the most widespread of the verses quote above is √*rakṣ* "guard," for the "guarding" of women also becomes more textually prominent

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[24] *BDh* III.45. Note that the verse is quoted in Book III, which is generally considered to belong to the later additions to the text (see Olivelle 2000: 191), while the far less elaborate prose statement is found in what Olivelle calls "Proto-Baudhāyana."

[25] *BDh* III.45 *putras tu sthavire bhāve*.

[26] *Pāda* c allows for multiple sons: *rakṣanti sthavire putrāḥ*.

as time progresses, though the concept is present from the beginning.[27] I will here briefly summarize, as well as adding to, the scattered references to "guarding" found earlier in this chapter. In *Āpastambha* we encountered the king's guarding of women from sex after a sexual encounter (II.26.22–23). But the standard notion of the husband guarding his wife is also met with there, in verses repeated elsewhere in the *dharma* literature:

> . . . | *tasmād bhāryāṃ rakṣanti bibhyantaḥ pararetasaḥ* || *ĀpDh* II.13.6
>
> Therefore (people) guard their wives, fearing the seed of strangers.
>
> [= *BDh* II.3.34 (sim. II.4.2), cf. *VaDh* XVII.9]

As we also saw, beginning with *Gautama* (XII.2–3) punishments for sexual relations with women may vary depending on whether the woman was guarded or not, and this distinction is especially well developed in *Manu* (VIII.374–378, 382–385). We also just saw how *Manu* generates variations on the "guarding verse." But perhaps what is most striking about the treatment of guarding in that text, as compared to the earlier mentions of it, is the virulence of the verbal justification for guarding women. The practical reason for it, fear that another man will impregnate one's wife, was dealt with in a single participial phrase (*bibhyantaḥ pararetasaḥ*) in *Āpastambha* and subsequent texts. But *Manu* begins his section on the laws concerning husbands and wives with verse upon verse (IX.2–21, with occasional eruptions later) detailing the vicious and sensual tendencies of women and the consequent necessity to keep them as closely guarded as possible. Forms of the root *rakṣ* occur seventeen times in verses 3–16.[28] The passage reads throughout like a personal diatribe, not a measured expression of dharmic practice, in verses like the following:

> *naitā rūpaṃ parīkṣante nāsāṃ vayasi saṃsthitaḥ* |
> *surūpaṃ vā virūpaṃ vā pumān ity eva bhuñjate* || *MDh* IX.14
>
> *pauṃścalyāc cālacittyāc ca naiḥsnehāc ca svabhāvataḥ* |
> *rakṣitā yatnato 'pīha bhartṛṣv etā vikurvate* || IX.15

27 Two different roots are actually used for this concept, √*rakṣ* (as in the verses just cited) and √*gup*. I do not think there is a semantic difference in their usage in this context; rather they seem to be grammatically suppletive: √*gup* supplies the past participle (and once the agent noun *goptar GDh* XII.3), while √*rakṣ* provides everything else, especially the active transitive verb (*rakṣati*, etc.) and the gerundive (*rakṣya-*, *rakṣyatama-*). The negated past participle *arakṣita-* is also found, especially in the beginning of the ninth chapter of *MDh* containing a concentration of other forms of √*rakṣ*.

Another grammatical anomaly is that in one verse in *Manu* (VIII.374) the adjective is masculine, not feminine as expected, though it is followed by several verses containing the feminine phrase *brāhmaṇī- (a)guptā-*.

28 Verses 3 (3x), 4, 5 (2x), 6, 7 (2x), 9, 10 (2x), 12 (3x), 14, 16.

> They don't look for beauty, nor are they stuck on youth. Handsome, not handsome—they enjoy him, (just thinking), "He's a man!"
>
> Because of their whorish ways,[29] their flighty minds, their lack of affection by nature, even when guarded with great effort, they still thwart their husbands.

What is astonishing about this outpouring is that the legal provision is the same one we encountered already in *Āpastambha* and throughout the Dharmasūtras; it has simply been invested with an emotional punch that is not there (or at least not overt) in the *sūtras*. The "law" hasn't changed, but the sentiment it evokes seems to have—or at least has achieved textual expression for the first time in the dharmic tradition.

My claim here then is that what especially sets *Manu* apart from the Dharmasūtras, especially the later ones, *Baudhāyana* and *Vasiṣṭha*, is the expressed *attitude* toward women, rather than the substance of the provisions regarding them. *Manu* presents a fully articulated dichotomy between the devious, almost ungovernable, sluttishly inclined harridan and the submissive, retiring, industrious wife and mother, the benign focus of homelife—the dichtomous view I referred to at the beginning of this chapter as "Victorian." There is something wrenching and almost schizophrenic (in the popular sense) about the often abrupt transition from saccharine sentiments exalting the good woman (e.g., III.55–62, V.160, 165–166, IX.22–29) and the vicious denunciations of her opposite (e.g., II.213–214, V.161–164, the already mentioned IX. 2–21, also IX.77–80, 83–84). For the Victorian echoes (of "the angel in the home") consider especially the following verse, identifying the virtuous wife as "the light of the household":

> *prajanārthaṃ mahābhāgāḥ pūjārhā gṛhadīptayaḥ* |
> *striyaḥ śriyaś ca geheṣu na viśeṣo 'sti kaś cana* || *MDh* IX.26
>
> Those who have much good fortune in producing (children), who are deserving of honor, the lights of their households—
> Between (those) women and Śrī's (goddess[es] of fortune) in households there is no difference at all.

But even the women most to be honored are viewed with suspicion and a certainty that left to their own devices, their evil nature will assert itself. In the section concerning the respect to be given to the guru's wife, the student is still warned against her:

> *svabhāva eṣa nārīṇāṃ narāṇām iha dūṣaṇam* || *MDh* II.213 (cf. 214)

29 Olivelle renders *pauṃścalya-* as "lechery," Bühler as "their passion for men," but the word is derived from the old term for "whore," *puṃścalī* "she who runs after men."

All translations of *Manu* credited to Bühler are from Bühler 1886; those credited to Olivelle are from Olivelle 2005.

The nature of women is the violation[30] of men in this world.

There is essentially no trace of this general attitudinizing in the Dharmasūtras. The closest I can find is a brief passage extolling the virtuous wife and condemning the bad one in *Vasiṣṭha*:[31]

pativratānāṃ gṛhamedhinīnāṃ satyavratānāṃ ca śucivratānām I
tāsāṃ tu lokāḥ patibhiḥ samānā gomāyulokā vyabhicāriṇīnām II *VaDh* XXI.14

Of householder's wives avowed to their husbands, avowed to truth and purity—
Their worlds [in the next life] are equal to their husbands, but those who stray have jackals' worlds.

—as well as several praising the mother: *VaDh* VIII.16 declaring the dependence of all beings on their mother and *VaDh* XIII.48 (= *MDh* II.145) in which the primacy of the mother in eminence (*gaurava*) is asserted over that of the father, teacher (*ācārya*), and tutor (*upādhāya*).[32]

What has caused this apparent stiffening of attitude toward women? Of course, one thing may be the nature of the text itself: as I said at the beginning, *Manu* has broader aims than the Dharmasūtras; gratuitous moralizing has little place in the *sūtras*. And we have already identified, at great length, another major motivation in my view—the gradual realization that women have both mental agency and the capacity to act, and the apprehension and hostility that realization evoked. But there is at least one other possible contributor, namely, the rise of a threatening new female type, the unmarried religious woman. In the brahmanic late Vedic form of "Hinduism" reflected in the *dharma* texts we have been examining, there is only one model for virtue and religious devotion in women, that of the dutiful wife. Even after the ritual partnership we saw in *Āpastambha* had receded into the conceptual background, a woman could fulfill her religious duties only by devotion to a properly married husband and by bearing sons to continue his line.[33] No separate path of religious devotion, renunciation, asceticism, or good works was available for her, though she could optionally accompany her husband to ascetic life in the forest when he became a *vānaprastha* (*ĀpDh* II.22.8–9, *MDh* VI.3, and see Olivelle 1993: 113–114).

It was only in widowhood that something resembling individual and personal religious practice seems to have been allowed to women, and it is my hunch that this was rather by accident. A widow was one whose role in life was over by definition, and given that women were considered untrustworthy and prone to sensuality at the best of times, it made sense to place as many restrictions as possible on a widow's way of life and sense-pleasures.[34] These restrictions, imposed externally as negative means of control (in my view), add up to much the same thing in day-to-day terms as ascetic practices undertaken by oneself for positive goals. The widow becomes de facto an ascetic in spite of herself (and in spite of her guardians). According to *Baudhāyana*, for the year after her husband dies, "she should avoid honey, meat, alcoholic drink, and salt and sleep on the ground" (*BDh* II.4.6 . . . *madhumāṃsamadyalavaṇāni varjayed adhaḥ śayīta*); *Vasiṣṭha* (XVII.55) enjoins similar restrictions on food and sleep (though only for six months), referring to this behavior as *vratacāriṇī* "observing her vow." Manu's description of the widow's circumscribed life occupies a number of *ślokas* (V.156–166) and includes voluntary austerities: *MDh* V.157 ***kāmaṃ tu** kṣapayed dehaṃ puṣpamūlaphalaiḥ śubhaiḥ* "At will she may fast with pure flowers, roots, and fruits." Perhaps the most striking hint of the transformation of guarded widow to voluntary ascetic is found in *Vasiṣṭha*, concerning the widow(s) of the king.

tadvadhūś cānyāś ca I *rājapatnyo grāsācchādanaṃ labheran* I *anicchantyo vā pravrajeran* II *VaDh* XIX.32–34

His bride and the other wives of the king[35] should receive food and clothing. If they don't wish this, they may "go forth."

As is well known, *pra √vraj* is the technical term for becoming a wandering ascetic, already in the Dharmasūtras. Both Bühler and Olivelle interpret it in its technical sense here, I think rightly,[36] rather than as an expression simply of "take it or leave." Notice again that the "going forth" is a choice open to these widows, not a requirement.

Despite this slight indication that respectably orthodox brahmin (indeed royal) women might take up ascetic wandering in widowhood, the model for the lone ascetic woman depicted in *Manu* and later texts was most likely derived from the "heterodox sects," especially from Buddhism with its recent institution of orders of nuns.[37] That

[30] The same word *dūṣaṇa-* is used of the violation of virgins elsewhere (*kanyādūṣaṇa*), and I do not think the English term is too strong here: Bühler's "seduction" isn't strong enough; Olivelle's "to corrupt" is closer.

[31] Compare the even less emphatic statement of *Baudhāyana*: II.3.47 *bhartṛhite yatamānāḥ svargaṃ lokaṃ jayeran* "(Wives) striving for the benefit of their husbands would win the heavenly world."

[32] *Gautama* economically and without the extravagant exaggeration of the later passages: *GDh* II.50–51 *ācāryaḥ śreṣṭho gurūṇām* I *mātety eke*.

[33] At first glance the *putrikā* or "appointed daughter" (*GDh* XXVIII.18–20, *BDh* II.3.15ff, *MDh* IX.127ff.) might appear to be an exception. The daughter of a man without sons, she is "appointed" to bear sons to continue her father's line, not her father-in-law's. But her duty is still to marry and to have sons; the assignment of the sons' lineage and duty to the ancestors is simply switched.

[34] The need to exert this control over widows may again have come in response to widows who showed no inclination to behave with appropriate restraint, like the "rich widows" who are marks for unscrupulous men in the *Arthaśāstra* (*AŚ* I.18.9, XI.1.42, XIII.2.42–43 and for the source of their money III.2.19ff.).

[35] I do not understand the technical difference between *vadhū* and *rājapatnī* here.

[36] This interpretation in this passage is certainly supported by the fact that masc. *pravrajita* is used in the same way in provisions flanking this one (*VaDh* XIX.23, 37). On this passage see also Olivelle 1993: 189.

[37] See Olivelle 1993: 189–190 on evidence for female ascetics in Brahmanical literature. His assessment that the attitude expressed there toward female ascetics was

women might live together, apart from men, and move about freely while pursuing a religious vocation must have been shocking enough to brahmin sensibilities; that the vocation was not that of brahmin dharmic orthodoxy must have made it even more threatening. And I contend that part of the impetus for the intensely misogynist sentiments in *Manu* comes from the challenge posed by this new female type, the independent *and* religiously unorthodox woman. The growing anxieties about women's agency which we have identified in these texts are crystallized in this rather alien figure. (I also think it likely that the even more corrosive misogyny in evidence throughout Buddhist texts like the *Jātakas* comes from the same source—though it may also reflect to some extent quasi-universal folklore motifs.) The Brahmanic response to the challenge posed by the female ascetic is to depict her as a woman of dubious morals, associating with questionable people dwelling on the fringes outside respectable life—while the male ascetic has few such aspersions cast on his reputation.

It is first in *Manu* that such women are mentioned as people to be avoided, not deserving of normal dharmic niceties. In V.90 funeral libations are forbidden to

pāṣaṇḍam āśritānāṃ ca carantīnāṃ ca kāmataḥ ׀
garbhabhartṛdruhāṃ caiva surāpīnāṃ ca yoṣitām ‖ *MDh* V.90

Women who have resorted to heresy, those who wander at will,
who harm embryos or their husband, who drink *surā*-liquor.

The first *pāda* of this verse makes clear reference to women following a religious life outside of Brahmanic orthodoxy, while the second may as well.[38] The immediately preceding provision denied funeral libations to, among others, men "who stay in religious mendicant conditions" (?) [Olivelle: "living in ascetic orders"] (*pravrajyāsu ca tiṣṭhatām*), so that the unorthodox females follow logically even though the term

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relatively benign differs from mine, and also seems to contradict his views of the "dangerous" nature of celibate females (pp. 185ff.).

[38] The term *pāṣaṇḍa* in *pāda* a is commonly glossed as "[conduct, etc.] outside of / alien to the Veda": *vedabāhya-*, vel sim.; sometimes more narrowly as "Buddhist, etc." (*bauddhādi-* Sarvajñanārāyaṇa on this passage and *MDh* IX.225) or by reference to the dress and accoutrements of particular heretical sects like the Kāpālikas (Medhātithi and Kullūka on this passage).

The translation of *pāda* b follows the neutral one of Olivelle ("roam about at will"), rather than Bühler's "who through lust live (with many men)." Given the immediately preceding *pāda*, *carantīnāṃ ca kāmataḥ* here may continue the topic by referring to *wandering* heretical women. However, the next half verse, concerning harm to child and husband and drinking of *surā*, allows an interpretation of general misbehavior for *pāda* b, rather than strictly religious, nonorthodox conduct, and indeed the commentators universally interpret it as referring to sexual promiscuity—though given the tendency in Sanskrit texts to lump ascetic women with sexually available ones, this commentatorial agreement need not be decisive. However, as Alexis Sanderson pointed out to me, the existence of compounds like *kāma-cāra-*, *-in-* "behavior/behaving according to one's desire" already in this period does suggest that the phrase here is to be applied more generally than I might wish.

pra √vraj is not used of them here. That idiom *is* found at *MDh* VIII.363, where a man who converses with, among other women, "female wandering ascetics" (*pravrajitāsu*[39]) does not merit the harsher punishment given for conversation with respectable, guarded women. Here we encounter the paradoxical character of this category of women—for, though they are here named by the term for wandering *ascetics*, they still are lumped together with loosest and most wayward of women: the "wives of traveling players and women who make a living on their own"[40] (*cāraṇadāreṣu . . . ātmopajīviṣu* VIII.362), who are depicted as trapping men into sex.

The ambiguous conceptual position that ascetic women held in brahmin literature is especially clear in the *Arthaśāstra*, where a number of such women, designated by several different terms, inhabit the raffish world of shady dealings. Though the idiom *pra √vraj* fairly commonly identifies male mendicants in the *Arthaśāstra*, its use for women is rare, and Kangle believes that it may refer to their simply leaving home, rather than embarking on an ascetic life.[41] His argument is in part based on IV.13.36 *pravrajitāgamane caturviṃśatipaṇo daṇḍaḥ* ׀ 37 *sakāmā tad eva labheta* "In the case of sex with a *pravrajitā*, the fine is 24 paṇas. If she was willing, she should receive the same." Kangle believes the fine is too light for *pravrajitā* to refer to "a nun": it is just twice the fine for forced sex with a prostitute (IV.13.38). But given the cynical view of the viritue of female ascetics (as in the passages from *Manu* above[42]), I see no bar to interpreting the idiom in its usual fashion. The fact that the masculine form does refer to ascetics makes that the default interpretation of the feminine as well, and in one passage a male ascetic arranges for female companionship on his travels: II.2.29 imposes a fine on a man who has "gone forth" without providing for his family, or who "causes a woman to 'go forth'" (*striyam . . . pravrājayant-*); parallelism would suggest that she too was going forth to mendicancy.

Another term is the related lexeme *pari √vraj* lit. "wander around." The male version (*parivrājaka*) is defined at *AŚ* I.3.12 in standard terms appropriate to ascetics.[43] The female *parivrājikā* is instead presented in her secondary role, as undercover agent provocateur (-teuse?), encouraging suspected officials to engage in illegal behavior. Her original social class seems to have been high, and she moves easily among high officials and in royal circles. Furthermore, her own sexual morality does not seem to be in question; she simply incites others to sexual license. A wide-ranging definition is given in the following passage:

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[39] Identified as *bauddha-* by a number of commentators (Kullūka, Rāghavānanda, Rāmacandra); cf. also *bhikṣukī-* of Sarvajñanārāyaṇa.

[40] This interpretation of *ātmopajīviṣu*, following Olivelle, seems more sensible than Bühler's "those who live on (the intrigues of) their own wives" because in context the locative should refer to a class of women, not to men who live off them.

[41] See *AŚ* II.23.2, III.3.23, IV.13.36 and Kangle especially on the last.

[42] Of course Kangle would probably interpret the *Manu* passages also as simply referring to women who have left home.

[43] The term *parivrājaka*, *-ikā* does not appear in *Manu*, but the verb *pari √vraj* appears in that text, referring to the fourth *āśrama* (i.e., the life of a *saṃnyāsin*), while *pra √vraj* refers to embarking on the third *āśrama* (i.e., that of a *vānaprastha*). Cf. the use of *parivrajet* in *MDh* VI.33, in contrast to that of *pravrajet* in VI.38. However, I do not think this distinction can be discerned in the *Arthaśāstra* usage.

parivrājikā vṛttikāmā daridrā vidhavā pragalbhā brāhmaṇy antaḥpure kṛtasatkārā mahāmātrakulāny abhigacchet || *AŚ* I.12.4

A parivrājikā desirous of livelihood, a poor widow (but) proud, a brahmin lady, treated hospitably in the women's quarters of the palace, should go to the houses of high officials.

Neither her social position nor her religious affiliation is at all dubious. In fact, the description almost uncannily duplicates that of the king's widows in *VaDh* XIX.32–34, who are allowed to "go forth" upon his death. In *AŚ* I.10.7 she is employed to persuade each government minister that the chief queen (*rājamahiṣī*) is in love with him, as a test of their loyalty; an even more complex plot to test a high official involves her cooperation in XII.2.21.

A third term for a woman in much the same category is *bhikṣukī* (lit. "female mendicant beggar"). Again the masculine form *bhikṣuka* refers simply to a religious mendicant, but the feminine is used primarily of a secret agent. I am not sure what the difference (if any) there is between the *bhikṣukī* and the *parivrājikā*. Kangle (ad I.10.7) considers the terms synonymous. I think it more likely either that *bhikṣukī* is a general term for mendicant women frequently employed as agents, and that *parivrājikā* is a special type, of especially high social position, or that the two refer to mendicants of different status, the *bhikṣukī* being a more professionalized woman of a lower social class. Though she participates in the same sorts of scams as the *parivrājikā* (claiming to various officials that other women are in love with them, see V.1.50, XI.1.52; other intrigue XII.2.20), she is, as it were, officially enrolled in the secret service (I.11.1) and paid a wage identical to that of "village servants, secret agents, assassins, and poison-givers" (*grāmabhṛtaka-sattri-tīkṣṇa-rasada-bhikṣukyaḥ* V.3.23).

It is not surprising that a range of ascetic women fill not entirely respectable roles also in the *Kāma Sūtra*. The *bhikṣukī* figures among the "counsellors" (*mantrin*) of the courtesan (*veśyā*) and man-about-town (*nāgaraka*) in their romantic intrigues (*KSū* I.4.34-35); the house of a *bhikṣukī* can be used for a lovers' assignation (*KSū* V.4.43) and she undertakes the role of go-between (*KSū* V.4.63). We see her fulfilling this role in *KSū* V.5.24, when on behalf of a powerful man she manoeuvers the wife of a man in distress into entering the harem. Presumably for that reason, among others, a respectable wife should not make friends with a *bhikṣukī* (*KSū* IV.1.9). In several of these passages the *bhikṣukī* is listed along with other types of female ascetics, as well as ladies of the demimonde. In I.4.35 *bhikṣukyaḥ ... muṇḍā vṛṣalyo vṛddhagaṇikāś ca* "*bhikṣukī*, shaven (ascetics), low (śūdra) women,[44] and aged courtesans"; in IV.1.9 *bhikṣukī-śramaṇā-kṣapaṇā-kulaṭā-kuhakā-īkṣaṇikā-mūlakārikā-* "*bhikṣukī*, Buddhist nun, fasting nun, unchaste woman, charlatan, fortune teller, mixer of potions"; in V.4.43 *sakhī-bhikṣukī-kṣapaṇikā-tāpasī-* "female friend, *bhikṣukī*, fasting nun, ascetic woman." Clearly the categories of women religious had multiplied—and also clearly their reputations remained questionable.[45]

We also meet the *pravrajitā* again in the *Kāma Sūtra*, though less often than the *bhikṣukī*. In I.5.23 she is named as one of the types of women who can be taken as a mistress (though in nearby I.5.29 she is named as ineligible).[46] In V.5.8 she is the potential sexual prey of the "Superintendent of Threads" (*sūtrādhyakṣa-*) along with widows and women without protectors (*vidhavā-anāthā-pravrajitā-*). The *pravrajitā* in the *Kāma Sūtra*, as in the *Arthaśāstra*, may be sexually available, but unlike the *bhikṣukī* she does not seem to participate in other people's intrigues; she is not a professional go-between. The *parivrājikā* of the *Arthaśāstra* is not found in the *Kāma Sūtra*, as far as I can tell.

Thus the evidence assembled from *Manu*, from the *Arthaśāstra*, and from the *Kāma Sūtra* demonstrates that the female religious, heterodox or not, is viewed either as sexually available or as a cunning agent encouraging illicit sexual behavior in others, and this depiction shows the deep unease about this type of woman, who violates Brahmanic categories.[47] Male ascetics, in contrast, fit neatly into the system and therefore pose no such threat.[48] The rise of this disturbing female figure in turn reinforces the growing anxiety about women's agency even within the brahmanic system. I would like to point out here, as an aside, that if my reconstruction is correct, we have *no direct* evidence of the effect that the existence of these Buddhist nuns exerted on their Brahmanical sisters; we can only infer it from disturbances in the Brahmanical texts, just as certain astronomical bodies are posited only because of the effect they exert on the motion of directly perceptible ones.

44 The word *vṛṣalī* likely means "low-caste" or śūdra woman and is fairly common, for example, in *Manu*, as is the corresponding masculine *vṛṣala-*. But the phrase found here, *muṇḍā vṛṣalyaḥ*, also occurs in the *Arthaśāstra* (I.12.5), also in context of the *parivrājikā*, and Kangle interprets it as "shaven nuns of heretical sects" (see his note ad loc.). Despite the suggestive juxtaposition of the three terms, it seems best to take *vṛṣalī* in its usual sense, in both the *Arthaśāstra* and *Kāma Sūtra* passages.

45 In later Sanskrit literature, of course, the Buddhist nun as go-between in romantic intrigues is a stock character—e.g., the supposed nun Kauśikī in Kalidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* and the real nun Kāmandakī in Bhavabhūti's *Mālatīmādhava*.

46 Of I.5.23 Doniger comments (2002: 189): "It is a stunning indication of V[ātsyāyana]'s attitude to religious renunciation that he even considers here, without either approval or censure, a renunciant woman as a potential sexual partner." But this is hardly a quirk of Vātsyāyana; as we have seen, the *pravrajitā* is so viewed in *Manu* and in the *Arthaśāstra*.

47 When a version of this paper was presented as the third Radhakrishnan Lecture at Oxford University in May 2003, the notion that female ascetics, especially those outside of brahminic orthodoxy, could be viewed as threatening by brahmin males was vigorously questioned, particularly by Professors Alexis Sanderson and Richard Gombrich. Although I cannot counter this questioning directly, save by the evidence already presented, I can point to parallel situations in other cultures. At the time Prof. Robin Stacey adduced the hostility toward orders of nuns in medieval Europe, and, as a woman intellectual in the second half of the twentieth century (CE), I have personally experienced some versions of this same hostility, however diluted.

48 Though it must be noted that various types of monks and male ascetics (pseudo-, lapsed, or real) get used for nefarious schemes in the *Arthaśāstra* also—e.g., the *udāsthita-* "apostate monk" *AŚ* I.11.4–8, the *tāpasavyañjana-* "seeming ascetic" *AŚ* I.11.13–20.

I would like now to challenge the neat model I have just constructed, though I hope that in my self-challenge the first model will emerge triumphant, if further complicated. For quite a while we have been discussing the development of the concept of woman's agency in the context of her potential bad behavior—and the corresponding need to exert more and more control over her power to act. The wife as ritual partner, in the earlier model, had some license to act, but only within the partnership, and she functioned as a cog in the machine (albeit an indispensible one), rather than as an individual with particular personality traits. In later texts she becomes endowed with such traits, especially with desires and appetites. The normative texts attempt to rein in the autonomy of this now unpredictable creature, while imaginatively multiplying the feared situations in which she might misbehave. The social conditions of the time, especially the rise of heterodox female ascetics, most likely contributed to this representation of brahmin women.

But are there any outlets for *positive* independent action by women envisioned in the *dharma* texts? As it turns out, women acting on their own exist (conceptually speaking) from the earliest texts we have examined, but I will argue that this evidence actually supports my reconstruction, for this independent action is always in the service of fulfilling a woman's natural destiny: to be properly married and produce legitimate heirs to continue the husband's line. In other words, its goal is the furtherance of the ritual marital partnership. Moreover, it is only undertaken in response to some particular crisis that threatens her ability to fulfill this destiny. When there is a danger that this may not happen, a certain latitude is allowed to females to make it happen.

On the one hand, as I have discussed at length elsewhere (Jamison 1996: 237–247), girls whose fathers do not marry them off within a prescribed period after menarche can emancipate themselves from their families and seek their own husbands (*GDh* XVIII.20, *BDh* IV.1.14 [=late *B*], *VaDh* XVII.67-68, *MDh* IX.90–93)—an extraordinary freedom afforded to a barely pubescent girl in this otherwise guarded and guarding culture. And we must not forget that the *svayaṃvara* familiar from epic stories (and, in my view, already attested indirectly in the *Ṛg Veda*; cf. Jamison 2001, 2003) grants the girl involved a right to choose her husband, though often a constrained one. The *svayaṃvara* does not figure in the *dharma* texts, despite their elaborate typologies of marriage, but the Gāndharva marriage does—marriage by mutual agreement of man and woman, arising from lust. In this type of "marriage," which the *dharma* literature recognizes as legal, at least for kṣatriyas, the girl has the right to give herself away and permission from her father or guardian is not required (*MDh* III.32, *GDh* IV.4.10, *BDh* I.20.7, *ĀpDh* II.11.20, *VaDh* I.33, *AŚ* III.2.6, and Jamison 1996: 211–212, 247–250).

On the other hand, the problem presented by the death of the husband before the birth of an heir is also acute, and the solution is the institution of levirate, though it is frequently condemned or just nervously tolerated.[49] Here too the treatment of the institution also begins to give hints of mental agency on the part of women. The widow is several times described in *Gautama* as "desirous to obtain offspring" (*apatya-*

[49] Levirate in the *dharma* texts: *ĀpDh* II.27.2ff., *GDh* XVIII.4ff., XXVIII.22ff., *BDh* II.3.17, II.4.5–10, *VaDh* XVII.55ff., *MDh* IX.57ff.

lipsuḥ GDh XVIII.4, *bījaṃ vā lipseta GDh* XXVIII.22), not merely appointed to do so. In Baudhāyana's treatment of levirate the widow is the subject of the verb "generate":

> *gurubhir anumatā devarāj janayet putram aputrā* ǁ *BDh* II.4.9
>
> Given permission by the elders, a childless (widow) may generate a son from her brother-in-law.

Moreover, a widow who does not desire it (*akāmā*, *BDh* II.4.10) need not participate in the levirate.

A similar, but less acute situation is that of a woman whose husband has gone abroad for an extended period. As I have also discussed elsewhere (Jamison 1999: 231–238), various texts present a hierarchy of waiting periods for the wife, depending on various factors, including whether she has borne a son or not. Exceptionally, *Vasiṣṭha* offers the woman a choice, however limited, of behavior in this case. After an absence of five years she may [should?—the optative is of course ambiguous] go to her husband (*VaDh* XVII.76 *bhartṛsakāśaṃ gacchet*), but she need not:[50]

> *yadi dharmārthabhyāṃ pravāsaṃ pratyanukāmā na syād yathā preta evaṃ vartitavyam syāt* ǁ *VaDh* XVII.77
>
> If she should not be inclined to go off on dharmic or financial grounds, she should behave as if he were dead.

As the rest of the passage makes clear (see especially 79), this means that she may marry again.

The case of a woman who leaves one husband and takes another may have fitted, at least originally, into this general category—a woman acting on her own to fulfill her natural destiny to bear children. In *Baudhāyana* the so-called *punarbhū* or "remarried woman" is defined as

> *klībaṃ tyaktvā patitaṃ vā yānyaṃ patiṃ vindeta* ǁ *BDh* II.3.27
>
> A (woman) who, having abandoned (her husband who) is impotent or fallen from caste, would find another husband.

Vasiṣṭha basically agrees, though he adds several more categories of unsatisfactory first husband:

> *yā vā klībaṃ patitam unmattaṃ vā bhartāram utsṛjyānyaṃ patiṃ vidate mṛte sā punarbhūr bhavati* ǁ *VaDh* XVII.20

[50] In contrast, *Gautama* requires her to go to the husband if he is heard from (*GDh* XVIII.15 *śrūtamāṇe 'bhigamanam*).

(A woman) who having left a husband who was impotent, fallen from caste, crazy, or when he has died, finds another husband, she is a remarried woman.

But *Vasiṣṭha*'s first attempt at definition of the same term is less understanding:

punarbhūr yā kaumāraṃ bhartāram utsṛjyānyaiḥ saha caritvā tasyaiva kuṭumbham āśrayati sā punarbhūr bhavati || *VaDh* XVII.19

"Remarried woman"—one who having left the husband of her youth, having gone about with others, resorts (again) to his household, she is a remarried woman.

Vasiṣṭha's category of *punarbhū*, then, includes two radically different types of women. Indeed, the term is a complex one: the changing definitions of and attitudes toward the *punarbhū* (and a son born to her) in various texts[51] have been treated by Thieme (1963 = 1984: 445–460) and are worth reexamination in the general context of developing ideas about women in this period, but this reexamination is beyond the scope of this chapter.

The abandonment of a seriously flawed husband is specifically allowed by the *Arthaśāstra*:

nīcatvaṃ paradeśaṃ vā prasthito rājakilbiṣī |
prāṇābhihantā patitas tyājyaḥ klībo 'pi vā patiḥ || AŚ III.2.48

A husband who has gone to a low condition or to another country,[52] has offended against the king,
Harms [/intends harm] to life, is fallen from caste or a eunuch—he may/should be abandoned.

Manu, on the other hand, gives the wife little latitude in dealing with even seriously bad behavior on the part of her husband. If a wife "transgresses against" (*atikramet*)[53] a husband who is overexcited (?),[54] drunken, or afflicted with disease (*pramattam* ... *mattaṃ rogārtam*), it is the woman who is punished (*MDh* IX.78). Even if the husband is "insane, fallen from caste, impotent, without semen, or afflicted with a bad disease" (*unmattaṃ patitaṃ klībam abījaṃ pāparogiṇam*) the only concession made to the wife is that she is not abandoned or deprived of her property if she hates him (*dviṣāṇāyāḥ*) (*MDh* IX.79); there seems to be no question of her abandoning him. In the earlier *dharma* texts it seems that the duty of a woman to bear sons can "trump" her duty to be a faithful wife—hence the *punarbhū* accepted by *Baudhāyana*—but in *Manu* the relative ranking of those duties has been reversed.[55]

In all the earlier cases displaying the older model, the pressure for a woman to become a member of a successfully realized partnership could override the usual restrictions on her independent action. Since *mental* agency is not attributed to her, she can be assumed to act mechanically and desirelessly to produce the necessary socio-religious result. But by Manu's time, women are recognized as creatures driven by desires and (note the last passage discussed, and n. 5) hatreds. She cannot be relied upon to act for the social good, but will rather follow her own inclinations, and so her freedom to act must be restrained.

I am not entirely sure what all this tells us about "between the empires." In the end we are left with the paradox with which we began—and which I will make no attempt to resolve here. The *notion* of women's autonomy seems to have grown in the period we are discussing, the notion of a kind of subversive mental independence. It indeed was not just a notion, but embodied in the threatening figure of the heterodox female ascetic, for us most clear in the Buddhist *bhikkhunī*. And the later texts like *Manu* react to this independence with a crackdown (at least conceptually) on women's autonomous action and an almost startling misogyny, in contrast to the earlier texts. The general foment of the period of the time between the empires, the opening up of the market place of ideas, as it were, can take its share of credit or blame for these developments, I suppose, though direct lines of evidence are wanting. In addition I would like to emphasize just two things. First, whatever change and development there is in the *dharma* materials is perceptible primarily below the surface. The significant change in attitude that I claim to see is played out against what is in essence a static background: it is remarkable how many of the provisions regarding women are repeated almost verbatim from text to text. Second, one of the major impetuses for the change in attitude (again, in my opinion), the rise of the heterodox female ascetic, is essentially invisible, certainly marginal, in these texts. We can infer her influence only from its effects. As usual, the history of women in ancient India must be reconstructed from "between the lines."

[51] Including *MDh* IX.175–176 and the *Kāma Sūtra* IV.2.36ff., where Doniger translates *punarbhū* as "second-hand woman." See also her note ad 36.

[52] The abandonment of a husband who has gone on a journey contradicts the provisions later in the *Arthaśāstra* (III.4.24ff.), which elaborately establish graded waiting periods for the wife in such a situation, as do the *dharma* texts, as we have mentioned.

[53] Quite possibly a reference to adultery, see n. 11, though it could have a more general sense. Bühler's "show disrespect," Olivelle's "snub" seem too restricted and too petty, given the usage of the lexeme elsewhere.

[54] The lexeme *pra* √*mad* seems to refer to temporary lapses from mental equanimity, through general heedlessness or sexual excitement, while *ud* √*mad*, encountered in the next verse, seems to indicate more or less permanent mental derangement. Similarly *rogārta* in this verse may refer to a temporary sickness and *pāparoginim* in 79 to chronic disease of some sort.

[55] This attitude in *Manu* is quite clear in a denunciation of levirate:
apatyalobhād yā tu strī bhartāram ativartate |
seha nindām avāpnoti patilokāc ca hīyate || *MDh* V.161

A woman who transgresses against her [dead] husband out of desire for offspring,
She acquires blame in this world and is kept out of the world of her husband.

Here it is not her lascivious nature that gets her condemned, but what ought to be a commendable desire to extend her husband's line.

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9

Changing Perspectives in the Sanskrit Grammatical Tradition and the Changing Political Configurations in Ancient India

Madhav M. Deshpande

POLITICAL CHANGES AND CHANGES IN PERSPECTIVES ON LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR

In an oft-cited verse from the *Mahābhārata*, a debate over agency for change is referred to. Is the time responsible for the emergence of kings of a certain kind, or does the king initiate a particular period of history? The verse concludes by saying that undoubtedly it is the king who is the cause of time.

> *kālo vā kāraṇaṃ rājño rājā vā kālakāraṇam* |
> *iti te saṃśayo mā bhūd rājā kālasya kāraṇam* ||

> Let there be no doubt for you as to whether the time(s) shapes the king or the king shapes the time(s). The king is the maker of the times.

Taking a cue from this discussion, one may, I suppose, be justified in discussing the question of the influence of particular kings, dynasties, or political configurations on prevalent conceptions of language, and by extension, conceptions of grammar. The intrusive role played by the British colonial administration in the development of particular varieties of Indian languages as standard languages for particular purposes is well known. Major Candy, a British officer in the early British administration of the region of Maharashtra actively intervened in selecting particular dialects of Marathi to be represented in the newly designed textbooks for Marathi. Prior to the British period, it was the Marathi dialect of the Chitpavan Brahmin Peshwas, the powerful prime ministers of Shivaji's descendants, that emerged as the elite form of Marathi. In ancient India, we don't have direct statements from kings providing us their linguistic policies. However, Rājaśekhara's *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*[1] provides anecdotal reports of linguistic preferences of certain kings. It is said that the Magadhan king Śiśunāga made a rule that no one in his harem should utter the consonants *ṭ*, *ṭh*, *ḍ*, *ḍh*, *ś*, *ṣ*, and

[1] *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, p. 50.

kṣ. King Kuvinda is also said to have banned certain harsh consonants in his harem. King Sātavāhana supposedly insisted that only Prakrit be spoken in his harem. In contrast, Sāhasāṅka of Ujjayinī insisted that only Sanskrit be used in his harem. Preferences of this sort may have existed all along in various parts of India and may have affected the value of particular languages or dialects in the eyes of the subjects of these kings. At least, one must make a note that royal policies may have been influential in certain ways. In this context, I would also like to refer to Michael Witzel's discussion (Witzel 1995) of the role played by the kings of the Kuru Dynasty in facilitating, if not sponsoring, the process of preparation of the Saṃhitās of the Vedic texts. This process may have stabilized the oral texts of the Vedas, essentially in a north-central dialect of Sanskrit, partly effacing the previous dialectal variation, and leading to standardization of some sort, at least in phonetic terms. Such linguistic and textual standardization may have political correlates in stable and uniform administration over a reasonably large territory. Of course, we know very little of the historical facts of the Kuru polity beyond the cursory references in the Vedic texts and the legendary material in the *Mahābhārata*.

PĀṆINI: BETWEEN THE PERSIAN AND THE NANDA EMPIRES?

Pāṇini's grammar of Sanskrit follows a model of description that is shared with many dharmaśāstra and ritual texts. Unlike the *Prātiśākhyas* that are strictly confined to the description of specific Vedic texts, Pāṇini's grammar additionally aims at describing the contemporary Śiṣṭa "elite" form of Sanskrit at large. The globalized view of Sanskrit presupposed by Pāṇini and his successors in the tradition of Sanskrit grammar includes all temporal varieties from the Vedic texts to the current dialects, as well as regional and scholastic varieties, in a singular notion of a common language and its description. In brief, one comes away with an impression that in Pāṇini's view it is the same language that manifests across various temporal, social, and geographic domains with minor variations without losing its basic identity. The general rules of his grammar cover the common factor of all these domains, while the specific rules cover the variation found in specific domains. Besides the Vedic and the "current speech" domains, the grammar also refers to distinct regional domains such as *udīcya* "Northerners," *prācya* "Easterners." Elsewhere (Deshpande 1993, pp. 75ff.), I have discussed the question of the shifting boundary between "North" and "East" from Pāṇini to later grammarians. For Pāṇini, as for the Greek historians who derived their information from the northwestern corner of the subcontinent, it seems that the eastern boundary of Punjab is the dividing line between north and east. Pāṇini himself comes from the town of Śalātura, which lies half-way between Lahore and Peshawar. Evidently, if we are to believe Rājaśekhara's information, the scholarship of Vyāḍi, Pāṇini, Vararuci/Kātyāyana, and Patañjali was tested and celebrated at the city of Pāṭaliputra, the capital of the Nandas.[2] One can thus imagine that Pāṇini comes from a region of the northwestern corner of the Indian subcontinant, a region that was caught

[2] *śrūyate ca pāṭaliputre śāstrakāraparīkṣā - atropavarṣavarṣāv iha pāṇinipiṅgalāv iha vyāḍiḥ | vararucipatañjalī iha parīkṣitā khyātim upajagmuḥ || Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, p. 55.

between the polities of and was situated between the Persian empire on the west, and the empire of the Nandas on the east.[3] From the inscriptions of Darius we know that the regions of Gandhāra and Sindhu sent tributes to him. On the other hand, Takṣaśilā was an important regional capital of the Mauryan Empire. Considering the information provided by the Greek historians about who Alexander fought in this region, it seems clear that he encountered a whole host of small kingdoms and tribes in this area, after he defeated and killed Darius. There is no trace of armies of the large empire to the east in Alexander's battles. On the other hand, in a short while, in the same region, Candragupta Maurya fought and defeated the Greek army of Seleucus Nikator. Thus, one may conclude that Pāṇini's region was a border region, not the center of a powerful empire by any means. Pāṇini does not seem to present the Sanskrit dialect of a particular region, including his own northern region, to be the core or the standard dialect. The northern dialect is on a par with the eastern dialect in his description, both being equidistant from the abstracted core of the generic Sanskrit language which forms the target of his general description. This abstracted core is not the language of any specific social, temporal, or geographic domain. This lack of emphasis on a specific region, including his own, may possibly reflect the political weakness of his own region, in relation to other regions. Perhaps he was unwilling to recognize the superiority of the central or eastern region. Such a possibility indeed occurs to us when we contrast Pāṇini with Patañjali.

KĀTYĀYANA: RESPONDING TO THE HETERODOXY OF THE MAURYAS?

Patañjali calls Kātyāyana a Dākṣiṇātya, "Southerner." This refers to his preference for the taddhita forms *laukika* and *vaidika*, for Patañjali's preference for simply *loka* and *veda* (*Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, pp. 6–8). How far south do we take this southerner? Perhaps he comes from the region to the south of Patañjali's Āryāvartta, but it is unlikely that he comes from much farther south. Geography of the southern peninsular region of India is not evident in Pāṇini or Kātyāyana. In any case, a rather stressful situation of competition between Sanskrit and what we would call Prakrit, in part covered by the term *apaśabda*, "fallen word," suggested by Kātyāyana and explicitly used by Patañjali, becomes apparent in Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* (*Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, pp. 10–11). The term *apaśabda* as used by Patañjali includes ritual misuse of language as well as seemingly Prakritic "mispronunciations" and other "mistakes" incurred through what Kātyāyana calls *aśakti* "lack of ability" (*Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, p. 19). Kātyāyana seems to insist on a deliberate use of proper Sanskrit, *śāstrapūrvakaprayoga* "use of Sanskrit based on prior acquisition of the grammatical system" (*Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, p. 10). The function of the grammatical system is now perceived as pointing out that only through the use of proper Sanskrit, backed by the knowledge of the grammatical science, does one earn religious merit (*dharma*), and in this respect, the

[3] In my 1983 article "Pāṇini as a Frontier Grammarian," I have pointed out a few linguistic features of his homeland Sanskrit that also place him on the northwestern frontier of the subcontinent.

use of proper Sanskrit is like the correct use of the Vedic words in ritual (*śāstrapūrvake prayoge 'bhyudayas tat tulyaṃ vedaśabdena*, Vārttika 9, *Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, p. 10). The whole discussion seems to be geared to asserting the value of deliberately studying and using proper Sanskrit, in the face of a perceived decline of and/or opposition to it. This is best explained on the background of the Mauryan period that begins with the evident support of Jainism by Candragupta and the support of and conversion to Buddhism by Aśoka explicitly recorded in his inscriptions. In Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* one notices a change in the meaning of *dharma* from its earlier restricted reference to ritual obligations to include a wider coverage of nonritual *laukika* "worldly" sociocultural norms of propriety fitting the behavior of a person following the Vedic tradition. The elevation of certain *laukika* activities to a dharmic status, besides the inherited domain of Vedic ritual dharma, is a new development. However, this new *laukika* domain must be distinguished from non-Vedic traditions like those of Jainism and Buddhism. Here, the *laukika* domain, sitting next to the Vedic domain, has acquired its dharmic status through analogy with the dharmic activities that fall within the Vedic domain. This is clear from Kātyāyana's Vārttika 10 cited above. The *laukika* usage of Sanskrit now acquires a dharmic status by being similar to the Vedic usage of language. Thus, only those *laukika* actions are dharmic, that are similar in some ways to the Vedic actions. This may be compared with Patañjali's assertion that Pāṇini's sūtras are like *chandas* "Vedic texts" (*chandovat sūtrāṇi bhavanti, Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, p. 37). This a step in the direction of the eventual appropriation of all *dharma* under the Vedic umbrella (cf. *vedo 'khilo dharmamūlam, Manusmṛti* 2.6).

Other possible hints in Kātyāyana's *Vārttikas* include a seeming reduction in respect felt toward kṣatriyas and vaiśyas. While Pāṇini's rule (*pratyabhivāde 'śūdre*, 8.2.83) seems to prescribe certain use of pluta in responding to the greetings from non-śūdra individuals, Kātyāyana extends the exclusion to Asūyaka, "jealous," individuals (Vārttika 1: *aśūdrasryasūyakeṣu*), possibly referring to some sort of social or religious heterodoxy, and says that the use of this pluta is only optional in reference to Rājanyas and vaiśyas (Vārttika 2: *bhorājanyaviśāṃ vā*). Again, this may be similar to the emergence of the notion in the Purāṇas that there were no true kṣatriyas after Nandas, i.e. like Paraśurāma in an earlier age, the evil Mahāpadma Nanda killed off true kṣatriyas, and that what follows subsequently is only the dynasties of the pseudo-kṣatriyas, who are in fact nothing more than śūdras. This puranic animosity toward Nandas and Mauryas may have been prompted by their likely support of heterodoxies like Jainism and Buddhism. Kātyāyana seems to share in this general feeling.

The other distinct contribution of Kātyāyana is his assertion that all references to regional dialects (*deśanirdeśa*) and teachers (*ācāryanirdeśa*) in Pāṇini are purely indications of respect (*pūjārtha*) and not to indicate any restrictions on the use of these forms. All these forms are equally proper for everyone and they equally lead to earning merit for their user. They are all indications of general options (*vāvacana*). This indicates an important shift in perception of dialectal usages from the original rules of Pāṇini, and may be paralled by moves elsewhere in Vedic traditions, where the entire Veda, and not just one's own branch, is asserted to be the basis of *dharma* (cf. *vedo 'khilo dharmamūlam*). These are probable indications of an emerging consolidation and fortification in the face of the rising tide of heterodoxy.

One must also note that Kātyāyana does not seem to subscribe to an Āryāvartic

home for the best form of Sanskrit, as does Patanjali. What could this mean? Perhaps, very much like Pāṇini, Kātyāyana, the southerner (*dākṣiṇātya*), may himself come from non-Āryāvartic outer-lands, and hence did not emphasize the superiority of the language of the region of Āryāvarta, which was in his days, in all likelihood, under the heterodox rule of the Prakrit-sponsoring Mauryas. Thus, there may have been two possible factors at work here. One is the attitude of grammarians who belonged to "peripheral" regions versus those grammarians who belonged to the culturally central region of Āryāvarta. The other may be the contemporary domination of the region of Āryāvarta by heterodox rulers like the Mauryas.

PATAÑJALI'S "PROPER" SANSKRIT IN THE ĀRYĀVARTIC REGION

As we move from Kātyāyana to Patañjali, we are, in all probability, approaching the post-Mauryan reign of the Śuṅgas. The references in the *Mahābhāṣya* to the gold-greedy Mauryas selling the images of gods (cf. *mauryair hiraṇyārthibhir arcāḥ prakalpitāḥ, Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 2, p. 429, and the debate between Peter Peterson and R. G. Bhandarkar on this issue, see: R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, pp. 148ff.), and Vedic sacrifices performed by brahmins for the king Puṣyamitra (*iha puṣyamitraṃ yājayāmaḥ, Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 2, p. 123, and R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, pp. 108ff.) seem to bring us to a period when Sanskrit grammarians are looking back with some relief at the bygone age of the heterodox Mauryas and with approval at the contemporary rule of the Brahmanical Śungas. These Brahmanical attitudes toward Mauryas and Śuṅgas are in general agreement with what one finds in the puranic materials, and have their counterparts in Buddhist literature that moans for the end of the Mauryas and apprehension at the Brahmanical Śuṅgas (cf. Aśokāvadāna).[4]

Patañjali's singular contribution lies in his doctrine of the Āryāvartic home of the Śiṣṭas, who alone naturally speak proper Sanskrit, even without learning it from Sanskrit grammarbooks, and the grammarians look up to them in formulating their rules. The Āryāvarta of Patañjali, as also of the Dharmaśāstra tradition, is the region that lies to the east of the disappearance of the river Sarasvatī, to the west of Prayāga, to the south of the Himālayas and to the north of the Vindhyas (cf. *Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 3, p. 174). In this region, apart from the exception of the few "natural" speakers of proper Sanskrit, learned selfless brahmins speak proper Sanskrit in their ritual and scholastic activities, even while speaking the local Prakrit dialects in their family. The great sages Yarvāṇastarvāṇaḥ spoke proper words like *yad vā naḥ* and *tad vā naḥ* only during ritual performances (*yājñe karmaṇi punar nāpabhāṣante*). In other environments they used Prakritic expressions like *yarvāṇa* and *tarvāṇa*. Patañjali cites their practice with approval (cf. *Mahābhāṣya*, vol.1, p. 11). On the other hand, he cites the Śatapatha passage where the Asuras, saying the improper words *helavo helavo* were defeated.

4 The discussion at the conference pointed out that a good deal of our information on the Śuṅgas is based on puranic sources, and that there is relative paucity of numismatic and inscriptional material to confirm their prominence.

Evidently they used *apaśabdas* "fallen expressions" even in ritual performance, like the mispronunciation of the accents of the expression *indraśatru* by Vṛtra's father Tvaṣṭṛ (cf. *Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, p. 2). Among the many purposes for the study of Sanskrit grammar, Patañjali says that we need to study grammar so that we may not become Mlecchas, "barbarians," (cf. *Mahābhāṣya*, vol. 1, p. 2). There are hints in puranic literature that the brahmins likened the rule of the Mauryas to the rule of the Asuras and Mlecchas. The role of the brahmin Puṣyamitra Śuṅga in destroying the heterodox Mauryan rulers is likened to the mythical role of the brahmin Paraśurāma killing off evil kṣatriyas. Patañjali's discussion possibly has these new mythologies as its background.

Patañjali's Āryāvarta interestingly excludes the birthplace of Pāṇini in the northwestern region. It is surrounded by barbaric peoples like Śakas and Yavanas dominating the west and Kiṣkindhas and others dominating the south. I have noted that that, on the one hand, Patañjali's Āryāvarta and the selfless Śiṣṭas residing there have their near-exact counterparts in the Dharmaśāstric works, and the regional boundaries of this Āryāvarta also seem to match pretty well with the boundaries of the Śuṅga Empire as given in Schwartzberg's *Historical Atlas of South Asia*. This confluence may be significant. It is even likely that the use of the word Ārya is infused with a sense of religious revival under the Śuṅgas to refer to the region under their control, a new use of an otherwise old word. For Pāṇini (cf. *aryaḥ svāmivaiśyayoḥ*, 3.1.103) and Kātyāyana, the word Ārya does not seem to have a regional reference. On the other hand, the linguistic geography found in parallel passages in Yāska's *Nirukta* (2.2, vol. 1, pp. 127–128) and Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (vol. 1, p. 9) has a clear regional reference to Āryas, residents of Āryāvarta, which now emerges as the cultural center. In addition, the regions of Udīcya, Prācya, Saurāṣtra, Kāmboja, etc. are deemed to be on the periphery of this central region. They are not the home of the Śiṣṭas, though they also seem to have Sanskrit usage prevalent among some speakers. This sense of a center and a periphery, equally shared with the Dharmaśāstric tradition, is rather absent in Pāṇini and Kātyāyana, and could very well be part of a revivalistic movement shared by many different traditions. The grammarians and the Dharmaśāstras are both defending a newly formulated notion of *dharma*, most likely a counterpoint to the Buddhist and Jain *dhamma*, and the *dhamma* of the inscriptions of Aśoka. It is certainly not a mere continuity of the old Vedic tradition. It is more likely the assertion of a neo-Vedic tradition revived in the region of Āryāvarta under the Śuṅgas.

The region of Āryāvarta as the home of Śiṣṭa Sanskrit as proclaimed by Patañjali probably has some linguistic reality behind it. This becomes evident from the studies by Damsteegt on the so-called Inscriptional Hybrid Sanskrit. As one looks at the Prakrit inscriptions around the region of Mathura, one finds that closer one gets to Mathura, the language of the inscriptions becomes more and more Sanskritized. These inscriptions belong to a period a few centuries after Patañjali, and yet may indicate some surviving patterns of linguistic geography. Damsteegt himself likens this situation to Patañjali's highlighting the region of Āryāvarta as the home of proper Sanskrit (1978: 208):

> There is greater Sanskritization . . . in the Mathura inscriptions. This is probably the geographical situation of Mathura, in the Aryavarta. It is this region where . . . the classical Indian culture was formed. In Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, it is described as the native country of the ideal Brāhmaṇas who can speak the classical language without having studied its grammar. This clearly indicates that in the age of Patañjali (i.e. about the end of the first millennium BCE) this region was considered to be a stronghold of classical, brāhmaṇical culture, and that Sanskrit had an important place in it. It is not at all improbable that the Buddhists and Jains, penetrating into the Āryāvarta from more eastern parts of the country, gradually came under the influence of this brāhmaṇical culture and its characteristic language, Sanskrit, as a result of frequent intercourse with the Brāhmaṇas.

Damsteegt has not related the preeminence of Sanskrit in this region to the prevailing political factors, while such a situation indeed needs to be taken into account. The Sarvāstivāda tradition relates to us the notion that its canon was finalized at a council of Buddhist monks under the patronage of the Kushana king Kaniṣka. It is generally believed that Kaniṣka's patronage may have helped the process of Sanskritization. It is likely that the Kushanas may have continued the linguistic preferences of the Śuṅgas. That the religious doctrines of the Jainas and the Buddhists regarding the status of Māgadhī runs parallel to the politically dominant role played by Māgadhī in the Mauryan period is a possibility recognized by K. R. Norman (1980: 67):

> I would suggest that the idea of languages developing from Māgadhī is a clear indication of the state of affairs in North India during the time of the Mauryan empire in the fourth and third centuries BC, and I think that the idea of language development expressed in the Buddhist and Jain texts must have been arising during, and very probably because of, that empire. During the Mauryan period Māgadhī, the language of Aśoka's capital Pāṭaliputra, was the administrative language of North India, and it, or a modified form of it, was inscribed all over India to make Aśoka's decrees known to his subjects. I would, therefore, suggest that Māgadhī *sabba-sattānaṃ mūlabhāsā* was a (fairly) correct statement as far as North India was concerned in the fourth and third centuries BC, and it was natural that a statement which Aśoka might have made about his administrative language should be adopted by the Buddhist missionaries when they went to Ceylon. A similar use for missionary purposes would doubtless account for the Jain adoption of the same phrase.

The correlation of the political practice and religious doctrines inferred by Norman in indeed instructive and could be extended to other situations, such as Patañjali's assertions about the Āryāvarttic home of proper Sanskrit.

BHARTṚHARI AND LATER: AWAY FROM ĀRYĀVARTA

As one moves away from Patañjali to Bhartṛhari (around fifth century CE), the situation of Sanskrit grammar as well as attitudes toward Sanskrit become more complex. By this time, the Buddhists and Jains have begun to adopt Sanskrit as a vehicle for their traditions. While the Jains adopted Sanskrit more for commentarial purposes and did not extend it to their canonical literature, the Buddhist traditions adopt Sanskrit as the language even for their canonical texts. This is seen in the traditions like the Mahāsaṃghikas, Sarvāstivādins, Vaibhāṣikas, Sautrāntikas, and of course, the Mahāyāna traditions. The adoption of Sanskrit on such a large scale by the Buddhists led them to seriously enter even the field of Sanskrit grammar, adopting Pāṇini into to the Buddhist tradition (for details, see Deshpande 1997), and pursuing grammatical activities with full vigor. If our information is correct, Bhartṛhari's teacher Vasurāta was a Buddhist scholar, and its was Vasurāta's teacher Candrācārya who recovered and revived the almost lost tradition of the *Mahābhāṣya*. Candrācārya evidently found the *Mahābhāṣya* surviving only in the form of manuscripts in south India (*dākṣiṇātyeṣu granthamātreṇa saṃsthitaḥ, Vākyapadīya* 2.480). Without going into the details of the account of the transmission of the *Mahābhāṣya*, I just wish to highlight two factors, the role played by the Buddhists in the transmission of the Pāṇinian tradition and its extension to the southern parts of India. Now the non-Vedic Buddhists (and Jains) are celebrating Sanskrit and Sanskrit grammar, and it has now spread far beyond Pāṇini's Śalātura and Patañjali's Āryāvarta into the southern reaches of India. Conceptions about Sanskrit and Sanskrit grammar that emerge during this period must be sensitive to these changed circumstances.

Let us note a few facts. While Bhartṛhari extols the virtues of Sanskrit as against the Prakrit apaśabdas, one nowhere sees any highlighting of the Āryāvartic home of Patañjali's proper Sanskrit. Bhartṛhari's Sanskrit is not bound by Āryāvarta. The myths about Patañjali gradually expand to south India, and the Patañjali of the earlier Āryāvarta appears as a devotee of the Śiva Naṭarāja of Cidambaram in Tamilnadu. Inevitably, the theme of the Āryāvartic home of proper Sanskrit is replaced by a more universal home in what Sheldon Pollock (1996) calls the Sanskrit Cosmopolis. The Sanskrit Cosmopolis produces an entirely different feeling for Sanskrit. While the Sanskrit grammarians have not articulated a particular view of Sanskrit during this new age, it is seen emerging more energetically in the areas of Sanskrit literature and literary theory. The poetic styles (*vṛtti*) in this new age make no reference to "poetry of the Āryāvarta," but refer to the regions of Gauḍa, Lāṭa, Pāñcāla, and Vidarbha, with the style from Vidarbha emerging as the best style. Rājaśekhara's Kāvyamīmāṃsā provides perhaps the best and the most extensive account of this new conception of pan-Indian Sanskrit. With Rājaśekhara, we are reaching post-Gupta India, in which gradually Sanskrit emerges as the dominant language of inscriptions in most regions and is given patronage by rulers in different parts of the subcontinent. To repeat my conclusions regarding Rājaśekhara (Deshpande 1993: 94):

> The perception of cultural variation in Rājaśekhara's work is of an entirely different order. There has been a great deal of change since the time of Patañjali and Manu upto the time of Rājaśekhara. While for Patañjali and Manu the Āryāvartta alone was the holy land, and all the outer regions were inhabited by fallen, impure and mixed populations, this view is no longer held by the time of Rājaśekhara. Rājaśekhara appreciates Sanskrit of the Gauḍas, poetry of the Kashmirians, Apabhraṃśa of Punjab, Prakrit of the Lāṭas and the recitation of the poets of Saurāṣṭra. All these regions are impure, fallen and mixed regions in the lists of the earlier Dharmaśāstras (Gharpure 1946: 16ff). The best literary Prakrit, Mahārāṣṭrī, and the best poetic style, Vaidarbhī, developed in regions outside the old Āryāvartta. Thus, in Rājaśekhara's work, and other works of the classical period, we find a very different awareness and perception of India. Here, every region of India has a share in the glory of the land and hence the cultural geography in Rājaśekhara is more even-handed and generous in comparison with the heavy-handed treatment of non-Āryāvartic regions, non-Brahmanical peoples and non-Sanskrit languages in the works of Patañjali and Manu.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one may be able to propose some very broad correlations between shifts in linguistic attitudes and changing political configurations. Indeed, political configurations represent only one of the variables in the complex multivarient movements of history, and other factors must also be taken into account. By placing the changing linguistic attitudes and perspectives in and about grammars, we are recognizing the role played by upholders of power in relation to those who were subjected to that power. Speculative as all this analysis must indeed be, it points us in the direction of the real world in which the Sanskrit grammarians functioned and to which they responded.

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10

The *Nārāyaṇīya* and the Early Reading Communities of the *Mahābhārata*

Alf Hiltebeitel

This chapter discusses a unit of the twelfth book of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Nārāyaṇīya*, for its bearing on the textual and religious history of post-Vedic and classical India. Although no portion of the *Mahābhārata* (henceforth *MBh*) has been considered so axiomatically "Gupta" (at least in part) as the *Nārāyaṇīya*, the evidence for such dating—furthered most recently in the collaborative volume *Nārāyaṇīya Studien* (Schreiner 1997a) and in subsequent essays by two of its authors (Oberlies 1998; Grünendahl 2002)—is far from convincing.[1] Likewise, it has been argued in that volume and by others before it that no unit of the *MBh* is so at odds with the rest of the text. It has become the axiomatic interpolation, and would have to be considered the ultimate test for any argument that the archetype recovered by the Poona Critical Edition, in which the *Nārāyaṇīya* is included, could provide access to the work as it was originally conceived. I have believed, however, for several years now that just such an argument is worth making (see Hiltebeitel 2001: 28–29). For the moment, since no one has found anything in the *Nārāyaṇīya* that is inherently and demonstrably later than the dates I propose for the *MBh*'s composition of at most two generations sometime between 150 BCE and the year zero (idem), let me begin by urging an open mind on the possibility that there are reasons to reconsider the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s late posting.

Thanks mainly to the research of Thomas Oberlies, it is an accepted premise in *Nārāyaṇīya Studien* that the *Nārāyaṇīya* has two parts, one as a whole older than the other. It seems that such emphasis on their relative chronology is largely new to that 1997 volume.[2] According to Oberlies, the older Part A was itself inserted into the *MBh* after its oldest components were revised to make it fit (1997: 84–86), and what remains of that revision still allows the reconstruction of a semi-coherent narrative based on those components. Part A's

> construction resembles . . . many other sections of the *MBh*: to a middle

[1] Space prevents discussion of most of the external and internal evidence for late dating introduced in *Nārāyaṇīya Studien*, which I presented in the conference version of this paper (Hiltebeitel 2003a) and must now hope to develop further in another publication.

[2] See Oberlies (1997: 75). A semi-precursor is Belvalkar (1954: 2,006), as discussed below.

> main story others are attached and to varying degrees contribute explication or commentary. The main story has the following course:
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> Upon conversing with Nārāyaṇa (322.1–5) Nārada flies off to Mount Meru (6), from which (7) he sees Śvetadvīpa situated in the NW and to its north the Milky Ocean. He makes his way to Śvetadvīpa (325.1) and recites a long stuti (3^{1-171}), whereby Nārāyaṇa is shown in a variegated form (326.1–10). Nārada leaves Śvetadvīpa after a conversation with Nārāyaṇa.
>
> To this ground-scaffolding further narratives are attached. (Oberlies 1997: 87; my translation as throughout)

Note that Oberlies is not concerned with Nārada's return from Śvetadvīpa (White Island)—a highly important matter for the text.

For present purposes, the main contention here, as I see it, is that Part B is a later, separately constructed unit, and the work of different hands. Whether or not one finally accepts this contention, and I will not, two things must be conceded: there are gains from the two-part perspective afforded, and the point is made in such thoroughgoing fashion that it is difficult to see a way around it. Nonetheless, one can already see the beginnings of a route in Oberlies's presentation of Part A as constructed around an originally semi-coherent narrative, which he holds up in contrast with a "nonsensical" whole that "lacks cohesion and homogeneity to a high degree."[3] That the Śvetadvīpa narrative begins and ends in Part A certainly does hold open the possibility that Part A would be an originally separate unit with its own coherence. But perhaps there is more cohesion in the relationship between Parts A and B than Oberlies allows. Oberlies's three chapters in *Nārāyaṇīya Studien* are devoted entirely to Part A, and mention Part B only in passing. It is really the other three *Nārāyaṇīya Studien* authors who, accepting his division of the text, try to work out issues of the relation between the parts: Peter Schreiner around the vision theme; Angelika Malinar around the ways the *Bhagavad Gītā* is recalled; and Reinhold Grünendahl in connection with the passages that mark the transition between the two parts. John Brockington offers another way to handle the relation that I find more persuasive. Having summarized the Śvetadvīpa narrative with respect to its vision theme and teachings, he writes: "In fact this doctrine of *ekānta*, the worship of the One, seems to be summed up in the first . . . chapters; the later chapters appear to be glosses on the themes enunciated at the beginning, interspersed with legends, at first sight miscellaneous but actually carefully chosen to exalt the deity, to reveal his multiple forms and the activities to which they correspond."[4] This is a helpful note of caution before we run off the stratigraphic cliff. I believe, however, that it is more than a matter of themes.

[3] Paraphrasing and condensing from Oberlies (1997: 75).

[4] I leave out, at the ellipsis, the words "six or rather seven" because it is unfortunately not clear what Brockington means by "the first six or rather seven chapters." The next sentence reads, "The idea that the first seven chapters form a unit is strengthened by the inclusion of a *phalaśruti* at the end of them (12.327.107). This should read 326.107 rather than 327.107.

BRAIDED FRAMES

What has been missed by the German team of scholars who try to divide Part A from B is that the carryover from Part A to B is actually very interesting and revolves around what I have called the epic's three frame stories: the "outermost" authorial frame in which Vyāsa recites the *MBh* to his five disciples, including his son Śuka;[5] the "inner" generational frame in which the Pāṇḍavas' great-grandson Janamejaya performs the snake sacrifice at which (in the presence of Vyāsa and Śuka) he hears the *MBh* from Vaiśampāyana, one of the four disciples who initially learned it from Vyāsa along with Śuka in the first place; and the "outer" cosmological frame in which the Ṛṣis of the Naimiṣa Forest hear the *MBh* from the bard Ugraśravas, who was also among those who heard it from Vaiśampāyana at Janamejaya's snake sacrifice. That is the sequence of the frames in the order of their transmission as the epic itself presents them.[6] With the second or inner frame being central as the one to carry along the main story, there are certain differences in the way the other two frames are felt as presences throughout it.[7] The outer Ugraśravas-Ṛṣis frame is felt by listeners/readers as an overhearing of the inner frame as retold from afar,[8] whereas the outermost Vyāsa-and-disciples frame is felt literally and with immediacy in the course of the narration of the inner frame by the fact that Vyāsa and Śuka are themselves listening and bodily present at Janamejaya's snake sacrifice and thus at Vaiśampāyana's inner-frame narration.

Heading the *Nārāyaṇīya Studien* scholars in these matters, Reinhold Grünendahl approaches things differently. He calls the outer frame the first dialogue level because it opens the *MBh* (although as just noted it is the third frame in the sequence of transmission), and he regards it as a very late coating of the epic, superimposed or "stamped" on the inner frame, which he calls the second dialogue level because one gets to it second in the text. As to what I call the outermost frame, Grünendahl simply folds it into the outer frame, since he regards the whole story of Vyāsa's authorship to be part of the "profile of ideas" (*Ideenprofil*) that gets stamped on the *MBh* to promote the Nārāyaṇa theology of the "epic Pañcarātrins."[9] Indeed, the outermost frame is not,

[5] I view what I have introduced as this third "frame" to be indispensable to understanding the workings of the other two frames now mentioned (see Hiltebeitel 2001: 34, 92, 279, 300, 317), which are in their own interrelationship so richly treated by Minkowski (1989, 1991).

[6] For the *MBh* and other Indian texts, I restrict usages of "frame" to narrative-level frame stories such as the texts present themselves. Grünendahl has unnecessarily confused matters by using "Rahmen" and "frame" (1997: 237, 240; 2002: 236–237) for ascribed "coatings" or "rings" (to suggest better terms) of "late" "theological" material hypothetically interpolated in a systematic way. He was followed in this by Oberlies (1998: 138–140) without, it seems, proper acknowledgment (Grünendahl 2002: 337–340). More technically correct but equally ascriptional, Fitzgerald finds that the Rāma Jāmadagnya story is "used to frame the Pāṇḍava narrative" (2002: 104–107). Such a usage could apply to any twicetold tale in the *MBh*.

[7] See Minkowski (1989: 405), noting that the outer frame is always felt behind the inner frame.

[8] Wherever Naimiṣa Forest is, and I argue that it is the twinkling night sky (Hiltebeitel 2001: 95–96, 158), getting there has been a long trip for Ugraśravas.

[9] Grünendahl develops this notion to describe a nexus of themes and concepts—including the "doctrine of identity" (*Identitätslehre*) of Nara and Nārāyaṇa

technically speaking, a dialogue level in the sense Grünendahl is using: that is, a dialogue that sustains the *MBh*'s narration. Rather than a dialogue, it is mainly a story: a story about how Vyāsa first recited the *MBh* to his five disciples as a communication of his creation—a teaching, a "fifth Veda." Yet there is dialogue between Vyāsa and his five disciples, including Śuka: in various exchanges between Vyāsa and Śuka sprinkled through the *Mokadharma* section of the *Śāntiparvan*; in the Śuka story itself that precedes the *Nārāyaṇīya*; and at three points in the latter. These are pieces of this outermost frame, which is by definition outside the two dialogical frames, the inner and outer ones. Beyond such actual dialogue passages, Vyāsa's exchange with his disciples is left tacit as an outermost frame behind the transmission of the *MBh* through the other two frames. As to the outer frame, beyond the *Nārāyaṇīya* passages under investigation, there are only a few other places where it is dipped to or elicited.[10] Grünendahl nonetheless treats the *Nārāyaṇīya* dips as exceptional, speaking of its three dips via a generalization about the first of them as "the only one in the whole epic, seen from its 'beginning' and end"; yet he affixes to this a note adding that "the single further reference point, 15.42–43, can here remain not taken into account" (1997: 227 and n. 162; 2002: 335 n. 110; but see n. 10).

Grünendahl includes the change from Part A to B as "not least" (1997: 227) among a group of passages[11] that present the teaching of the identity (*Identitätslehre*) of Nara and Nārāyaṇa at "switch-places" or "junctures in the epic narrative"[12]—the latter being an idea that he applies to the "secondary" work of late redactors (see n. 9

— that was not only "coined," "minted," or "stamped" (*geprägt, gemünzt*) in the *Nārāyaṇīya* but systematically superimposed on the "general epic" (210) by late Pañcarātrin redactors, first from the vantage point of Part A and then from that of Part B (1997: 222, 225, 229, 232, 235 and, in summary, 240; 2002: 311–312, 115, 336); see n. 6 above. Like Oberlies's use of "parallels" or "element clusters" to connect the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s "oldest" Śvetadvīpa sources with textual traditions outside the *MBh* (1997: 94–96, 108, 111), and even to account for missing elements in stories (110) or separate out a *Nārāyaṇīya* story based on a thematic similarity with a "late" puranic one (234–240, 296–378), Grünendahl dates epic passages as late by the appearance of his profile of ideas in still later texts (1997: 234–240, 296–378). Using "structure" for dating is of course fraught with uncertainty.

[10] At 1.1–54; by the briefest of dips at 2.46.4 (a reference I owe to an Emory University dissertation in progress by Emily Hudson); at 15.42–43; and at the epic's end with a wraparound (18.5).

[11] The others he mentions are Bhīṣma's words to "Vāsudeva (!)" (Grünendahl's emphasis) just before his death (13.153), Yudhiṣṭhira's words to Kṛṣṇa at Karṇa's death (8.69), and Vyāsa's explanation to Aśvatthāman of why his Nārāyaṇa weapon did not work (7.172)—all three coming at or near the ends of parvans (1997: 210–212, 223–224.

[12] *Schaltstellen*, as per Schreiner (1997: 11–12); see Grünendahl (1997: 211–212, 223–224, 227–230, 233, 239). These are useful ideas, but they are not given their only, and to my thinking, best interpretation: that such hinges are self-conscious and even artful "joins." On the contrary, Oberlies (1997: 76–77 n. 9) and Grünendahl link their notions to the secondary work of redactors. Grünendahl says his notion of *Schaltstellen* applies to "a great number of passages eliminated as interpolations" in the *Nārāyaṇīya* Critical Edition. This makes it look like most hinge passages do not make it into the Critical Edition, but obviously they do.

above). More emphatically (and at the beginning of his summation), Grünendahl says that among such *Schaltstellen*, the *Nārāyaṇīya* "occupies a central place because of its relation to the first dialogue level: its close idea-historical connection with diverse 'junctures in the epic narrative' strengthens the accompanying supposition that the frame [see n. 6 above] must be added in a comparatively late stage of the redaction history" (237). Going still further, he speaks of the dip as something inserted in the *Nārāyaṇīya* itself: "the interpolation (*Einschaltung*) of Sūta and Śaunaka here (326.860* . . .) *and at diverse other places* in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, especially at *adhyāya* 334 . . ." (1997: 49). I italicize to emphasize that while the first passage cited is a star passage and thus by the Critical Edition's standards can legitimately (though as we shall now see, I think erroneously) be excised as an interpolation, the "diverse other places" where Sūta/Sauti (i.e., Ugraśravas) and Śaunaka speak to each other are not. For Grünendahl the dip is thus uniformly and, it seems, axiomatically late, even though it is he who shows that Shripad Krishna Belvalkar was unconvincing in his attempt to eliminate it as a whole from the Critical Edition.

We must now address this mistake made by Belvalkar as Critical Edition editor of the *Śāntiparvan*, one that Grünendahl has brought to light (1997: 33–40) with Oberlies's concurrence (1997: 79–83).[13] This is Belvalkar's attempt to maintain the *Nārāyaṇīya* at the first dialogue level or inner frame and to avoid a dip to the second dialogue level or outer frame. Drawing support from only a minority of manuscripts, Belvalkar staked his claim principally on what Grünendahl calls "the negative findings of the Malayālam manuscripts" (1997: 51), which are sometimes supported by the northern manuscripts K7, D4 and D9.[14] In what follows, I will use the abbreviation "M" for these Malayālam manuscripts, and "M group" for the group of M plus K7, D4,9 that shows this agreement. This was not Belvalkar's only mistake in treating the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Using the same manuscript criteria, he followed M in splitting one *adhyāya* in two at the point where it switches from prose to poetry (at Critical Edition 12.229–230). This resulted in changing the *Nārāyaṇīya* from an eighteen- to a nineteen-*adhyāya* unit and thus removed the possibility that the number eighteen could be significant as a kind of epitome of the eighteen-parvan *MBh*, as it is, for instance, in the *Gītā*.[15] Now in considering these manuscripts, it is necessary to bear in mind Grünendahl's important reservations about V. S. Sukthankar's *Schriftartprämisse*: the latter's grounding premise as the first Critical Edition General Editor "that a kind of script constitutes a 'version'" (Grünendahl 1997: 30). Grünendahl shows that versions often overlap scripts, and that an "M version" in particular could not simply be characterized by its "purity" relative to other (Telugu and Grantha) Southern Recension

[13] On this point, Brockington seems to confuse matters, having Sauti speak to Nārada rather than Śaunaka (1998: 298), apparently due to a misreading of Esnoul (1979: 21), whom he cites here. Her point is that Sauti *also* speaks to Nārada, among others.

[14] For examples of correspondence between M and these three mss., see Grünendahl (1997, 51–53). According to Grünendahl, Belvalkar "underestimated" D4,9 and D9, regarding them as "minority readings" (1997: 33), and relegated K7 to a "secondary" Kaśmīrī group of mss. (37).

[15] Grünendahl (1997: 47); Oberlies (1997: 83; 1998, 127); and Brockington (1998: 293 and n. 142) all agree that this move of Belvalkar's was a failure.

scripts (33) akin to the again-alleged purity that Sukthankar attributed to the "Śāradā version" of the Northern recension (31). As Grünendahl indicates, the Śāradā manuscript tradition is incomplete for the *Nārāyaṇīya* and questionable as a version on its own as well as for its oft-alleged closeness to a "Kaśmīrī" version" (33–38). Nonetheless, although Grünendahl questions Belvalkar's inclination to follow Sukthankar's emphasis on the "archaism" and "primitive character" of M and the Śāradā/Kaśmīrī manuscripts, and a "striking correspondence" between them (39), I believe there is a significant correspondence between M and these far Northern manuscripts, not least in their relative brevity, and that such significance can be appreciated not only on the level of verbal correspondences but also by the evidence that these shorter manuscript traditions provide toward reconstructing the textual archetype of the *MBh* as a whole.

In what follows, I will thus argue that a certain redactorial agency, by changing the names and a few other touches (a few vocatives and other referential nouns; elimination of a couple of incorrigible passages), undertook to elide Sauti-Ugraśravas (henceforth Sauti) and Śaunaka, the speakers of the first dialogue level or outer frame, from the *Nārāyaṇīya* and replace them with Vaiśampāyana and Janamejaya, the speakers of the second dialogue level or inner frame. Keeping in mind Grünendahl's reservations about the *Schriftartprämisse*, it is not possible to say that a Malayālam redactorial agency was at the origin of this elision, only that such an agency is by far the likeliest suspect given that it is only in certain M manuscripts that there is a consistency in favor of the elision; that there are cases where M provides the only instances of the change; and, most important, the likelihood that the M tradition *is* old. These are all matters, however, that must emerge after further considerations.

Since this is one of those cases where a Critical Edition editor has made a quite significant mistake,[16] it should be corrected. For a fair appreciation of the *Nārāyaṇīya* and its place in the *MBh* manuscript tradition, its dip to the outer frame must be restored. Yet what needs to be appreciated is not just that the carryover from Part A to B includes this dip to the outer frame; it also includes Vaiśampāyana's recollection of a dialogue with Vyāsa. For this transition is achieved by the narrative device of a double dip not only to the outer frame, but to the outermost one.[17] In terms of overall *MBh* narration, these three frames are braided together from the immediate standpoint of the inner frame, with the main attention drawn to Vaiśampāyana's carrying along of the main narration. What is striking about the *Nārāyaṇīya*, once one reaches the carry-over from Part A to B, is that although there are, as we have observed, a few other dips to the outer frame (see n. 10 above), this marks the only place in the whole *MBh* where one moves back and forth through all three frames—in fact three times. At each point where the narration dips to the outer frame, Śaunaka comes in and asks a question. But the point of each of these dips is to explore a question that is raised and addressed at each level. Each dip is centered on one multifaceted doubt, and in each case one is taken to a

[16] For another, see Hiltebeitel (2001: 285 and n. 19 concerning *Rāmāyaṇa* 7, Appendix 13).

[17] Missing the double dip, Grünendahl (2002: 336) views the tripled primary dip dismissively as a "device used" for the "annexation of Part B" via "several repetitions apparently intended to provide Part B with a structure." Actually, the first double dip may be a triple one, as we shall see.

point where only the author, Vyāsa, can answer the question. For reasons that will become clear, it is necessary to set the three dips in the context of what precedes and follows them.

DIP TO THE SAUTI-ŚAUNAKA DIALOGUE

Prior to the move from Part A to Part B, Nārāyaṇa has made himself visible to Nārada at Śvetadvīpa. Coming to the end of a long revelatory speech, he gives Nārada leave to go. We begin just after this White Island Nārāyaṇa has told Nārada that not even Brahmā has had such a sight (*darśanam*) of him (326.96). Then, finishing his account of the "ancient and future mysteries" that include his various cosmic manifestations (*prādurbhāvas*; 96–97), he disappears. Now comes a "leading question" by Yudhiṣṭhira to Bhīṣma that probably sets the first dip in motion. It asks whether Brahmā is different from Nārāyaṇa, and, if so, why Brahmā is uninformed about Nārāyaṇa even after having heard Nārada's account of him: "This is a wondrous matter, surely, the glorification of that intelligent one [Nārāyaṇa]: Since Brahmā heard (it) from Nārada, how did he not know? Is the blessed lord grandfather without difference from that god? How was he not acquainted with the power of that one of unlimited energy?" (12.326.102–103). Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira that Brahmā is merely the creator through repeated creations and dissolutions, and that he recognizes the superiority of Nārāyaṇa (104–105). He then concentrates on how he himself received Nārada's account through an *ārṣeya* transmission—that is, via Ṛṣis (113)—and supplies the first occasion to refer to it as the essence of all narratives: "Of those hundreds of other virtuous narratives that are heard from me, O king, this is extracted as their essence. Just as the ambrosial nectar was extracted by the gods and demons, having churned (the ocean), even so this ambrosial nectar of story was formerly extracted by the Brahmans" (114–115). Then, after a praise of this narrative's merits, we come to the first passage that Belvalkar rejects in which Sauti says to Śaunaka and the Naimiṣeya Ṛṣis, "All this is told you that was told by Vaiśampāyana. Having heard which, so it was done by Janamejaya according to rule. By you surely the penances are all severe, and your vows carried out, all (of you being) foremost knowers of Veda, dwellers in the Naimiṣa Forest, all best of twiceborns, having reached the great sacrificial session of Śaunaka. May you sacrifice with well-offered sacrifices to the supreme self, the lord" (12.860*).

As Grünendahl observes, this is one of two rejected passages, the other being 334.11–12, that "come to have special significance, since Belvalkar's constituted text supports itself here exclusively on the M manuscripts" (1997: 53).[18] Belvalkar justifies making this one of the "few instances" in which "M readings are given preference not ordinarily due to them" as follows: the whole of Part B must be late because of its sectarian contents and stylistic features (*phalaśrutis*, *nāmanirvcanas*, prose "interpositions," appendix-like continuation of Nārada's visit to Śvetadvīpa), and because its dip to the outer frame would be "understandable . . . right at the very beginning of the Epic . . . or the conclusion of it," but not, as here, in the middle

[18] Earlier Grünendahl writes, "Of the 32 mss. that Belvalkar had at his disposal" here, "only four Malayālam mss. (M1, 5–7) support the constituted text—mss. which on other occasions . . . he acknowledges as having the least authority" (1997: 49).

(Belvalkar 1954, Critical Notes: 2226). Grünendahl is not convinced by these arguments (1997: 51–52), and comments: "despite the editor's great intellectual effort . . . .[19] in my opinion, the change executed to the first dialogue level places Belvalkar's argumentation and his text critical practice with respect to the change altogether in question" (53). I concur and would only add that here as elsewhere, it is much easier to explain how the dip would have been dropped than how it would have been so widely added. In rejecting these verses that mark the original beginning of the dip to the outer frame, the M mss. most likely deemed them incorrigible.

Belvalkar now follows up this first excision with his first change in speakers. Having removed Sauti along with what he has just said to Śaunaka, he can now have Janamejaya speak, again based only on M, as if he were still uninterruptedly addressing Vaiśampāyana. But as all other manuscripts attest, it is really Śaunaka speaking in response to the excised words of Sauti. And what Śaunaka seems to do is follow up the train of thought that arises from Yudhiṣṭhira's exchange with Bhīṣma as to the relationship between (the otherworldly) Nārāyaṇa and (the thisworldly worlds of) Brahmā:

> How is the blessed lord god, the first in sacrifices, the remover,[20] lord, ever the bearer of sacrifices, and conversant with the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, established in *nivṛttidharma*, enjoying peace, beloved of Bhagavatas; (how does) he also institute *pravṛttidharma*,[21] this blessed lord? How are the gods made worthy of shares in the laws of pravṛtti? How are nivṛtti laws made for the wise who are turned aside? This is our doubt, O Sauti;[22] cut through this eternal secret. Stories of Nārāyaṇa have been heard by you that are connected with dharma. (12.327.1–4)

To which, in another passage dropped by M (and some other mss.) probably because it was incorrigible,[23] Sauti replies, "What the disciple of the intelligent Vyāsa[24] (said when) asked by Janamejaya, that old account I will relate to you, O excellent Śaunaka. Having heard that glorification of the embodied supreme self, Janamejaya of great wisdom addressed Vaiśāmpāyana" (12.861*). That is, Sauti says he will answer Śaunaka by recalling an "old account" (*paurāṇam*) of what Janamejaya once asked Vaiśāmpāyana,[25] thereby already tipping us off as to the next step that lies ahead by referring to Vaiśampāyana as the "disciple of the intelligent Vyāsa." Set in the

[19] I elide here Grünendahl's qualification "at least in the passage named (334.11)," which indicates that he is more certain that Belvalkar is mistaken regarding 12.334.11 than the present case at 12.860*. Grünendahl tries, I believe unsuccessfully, to give Belvalkar some selective credence (see "*Mahābhārata* Reading Communities" below).

[20] 327.1b: *hara*. Cf. 12.330.71 (for Śiva).

[21] Thus "the law of the way that renounces acts" and "the law of the way of acts."

[22] With variants, for the Critical Edition's *vipra*, "O Brahman."

[23] Though according to Belvalkar Critical Edition notation, it was "inserted" in the many mss. where it appears.

[24] The Vulgate has *vyāsaś ca dhimataḥ* rather than *vyāsasya dhimataḥ*. This refers to Vaiśampāyana, which would provide reason for excising the passage by those who moved things to the inner frame, since he would not be referring to himself this way.

[25] Apparently "off the record" as regards the inner frame.

context of a bafflement as to whether the lower gods up to Brahmā and Rudra, who have abandoned *mokṣa*, give shares to Nārāyaṇa in the fashion that they receive them from men (327.5–9, 12–13), the vexing thorn of doubt is about "attachment to rites" (characterized as *pravṛtti*) versus *mokṣa* (without mention of *nivṛtti*), with the puzzlement focused on the gods' involvement with the former and seeming neglect of the latter: "Those who give their attention to *pravṛtti* measured to the influence of time are fixed there. Meting out time, that is the great fault of those given to activity. That is my doubt, O Brahman, like a vexing thorn in my heart. Cut it by a story of history (*chindhītihāsakathanāt*). My curiosity is surely piqued" (327.10–11). What can Vaiśampāyana do on such a weighty matter but, as anticipated, quote his guru Vyāsa:

> Ah, most deeply secret is the question you have asked, lord of men. This is surely not known by one who is not wise and heated with austerity, who does not know about the *purāṇas*. It cannot be answered quickly. Here, I will tell you what my former guru Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, the great Ṛṣi Vedavyāsa, was asked by me. Sumantu, Jaimini, and also Paila of very firm vows, I, the fourth disciple, and the fifth known as Śuka—to these five disciples, all come together, endowed with restraint, united together in pure conduct, wrath conquered, senses conquered, he taught the Vedas and the *Mahābhārata* as the fifth on Meru, the delightful best of mountains frequented by Siddhas and Cāraṇas. While they were studying the Vedas a certain doubt came up: the very one that was asked by you was explained to them by him. Since I heard it too, I will now tell you, O descendant of Bharata. (12.327.14–19)

Vaiśampāyana thus provides us with one of most detailed passages on the outermost frame and, needless to say, warns us that the answer he recalls from it will not be brief: he will now quote Vyāsa for seventy-eight verses (327.21–98). First, as regards the persistent doubt in question, Vyāsa indicates how he, like Nārada, comes to hold the answer: "I have practiced very great asceticism, the height of difficult asceticism, in order to know the past, present, and future, O excellent ones. When I had practiced this tapas and disciplined my senses along the shore of the Milky Ocean, by the grace of Nārāyaṇa (*nārāyaṇaprasādena*), this triple-timed knowledge became manifest[26] as I desired. Listen as to that knowledge; I will speak to that supreme doubt. As to what happens at the beginning of a kalpa, it was seen by my eye of knowledge" (327.21–23). Before addressing the topic of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* directly, Vyāsa preambles it with three distinctions: first, that between the supreme self known as Mahāpuruṣa and the unmanifest as the primal foundation that springs from him; then, that between the still unmanifest lord and what becomes manifest for the sake of world creation; and then, within this second operation, that between the lord now in the manifest form of Aniruddha, the first of the four Vyūhas[27] and the one associated with *ahaṃkāra*, and Brahmā "the Grandfather" whom he fashions (*nirmame*)

[26] Note the use of *prādurbhūtam* here, which resonates with the *prādurbhāvas*, Nārāyaṇa's "manifestations," revealed to Nārada just before the dip to the outer frame.

[27] The four Vyūhas and the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s treatment of them are too big a topic for this chapter. For the most useful discussion I know of, see Grünendahl (1997: 198–202, 206).

(327.24–27). Aniruddha creates the five elements and seven Ṛṣis plus Manu Svayambhuva called the "eight natural energies (*prakṛtayo 'ṣṭau*) in whom the worlds are established," and Brahmā creates the Vedas and Vedāṅgas for the world's success (28–30). All beings are thus created from Rudra on down, including the Divine is, and these, taking Brahmā as their immediate creator[28] and "the splendid Viṣṇu" as their creator beyond that and as "the one by whom and under whose authority (*adhikāra*) one must act," and who is "the uncontested authority, who knows the meaning," they ask Brahmā, "What is to be protected (*paripālyaḥ*) by him? He is the one with authority" (33–35). Brahmā admits this thought (*cintā*) has also occurred to him, and taking it as a question that raises the further issue of how the gods and is should perform activities "for the whole extension of the worlds" without the "destruction of their strength (*balakṣayam*)"—that is, their strength is something that they would have the right to think should be "protected" by the supreme god—he determines to lead the gods and sages to the northern shore of the Milky Ocean to ask "the Witness of the World, the Great Puruṣa, the Unmanifest" about this very matter (36–38).

After the gods and Ṛṣis do a thousand years of *tapas*, Nārāyaṇa finally speaks to them with a "sweet voice (*madhurāṃ vānīm*) adorned by Veda and Vedāṅga" (42) that addresses the key matter in stages. First, he says, 'Oho, you gods together with Brahmā, and you Ṛṣis who are treasures of *tapas*; welcoming you all, I would have you hear this important word. You know that what is done by me is a great welfare for the world. What you do in conformity with *pravṛtti* strengthens your vital breath. Well-done is the *tapas* undertaken, O gods, for the desire of my worship" (43–45). That is, a thousand years of *tapas* in conformity with *pravṛtti* has already been good for them. Urging that they should always count shares for him in every sacrifice, and that he will now explain their entitlement (*adhikāra* again), he recommends they now perform a "Vaiṣṇava sacrifice" according to Vedic precepts, a *sattra* (a sacrifice involving multiple sacrificers) in which Brahmā and the others will all give shares to Nārāyaṇa in accord with the law of the Kṛta yuga (46–50). Acknowledging that these shares have reached him, the bodiless Nārāyaṇa then blesses them standing in space (51):

> From *yuga* to *yuga*, be enjoyers of *pravṛtti*'s fruits. As to those who will also offer with sacrifices in every world, O gods, men will be made to accord you shares that are set forth in Veda. Likewise, one who has offered a portion for me in this great sacrifice, he merits the portion of the sacrifice regulated by me in the *sūtra* of the Veda. Uphold the worlds, you to whom is assigned the fruit of sacrificial portions. In this world you are apt to direct, according to your specific entitlement, the rites that you execute perfectly to obtain *pravṛtti*'s fruits. Strong from receiving these, may you uphold the worlds. You will be furthered in the world by all the sacrifices done by humans. Then, further me; that is what I expect of you. . . . This is fashioned for you in accord with the qualities of *pravṛtti*. This is instituted by me, O best of gods, until the destruction of the aeon. Think of the welfare of the worlds, lords, as your entitlement. Marīci, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, and Vasiṣṭha, these seven are indeed fashioned by mind. These are considered the foremost Veda-knowers, preceptors of Veda. Following *pravṛtti* law, they are assigned to procreation. The path of those engaged in ritual action, having become manifest, is eternal. Aniruddha is called the lord who makes the creation of the world. Sana, Sanatsujāta, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumāra, Kapila, and seventh Sanātana—these seven Ṛṣis are called mental sons of Brahmā. With knowledge that comes of itself, they are established in *nivṛtti* law. They are the foremost of yoga-knowers, as also knowers of the Sāṃkhya teaching. They are preceptors in the scripture of *mokṣa* and are promulgators of *mokṣadharma*.[29] . . . Go to your entitlement, and consider what is according to custom. Let all the rites increase in all the worlds. Be not long. (12.327.53e–71)

[28] 12.327.33. It is not so clear that they are right, since just before this it is said that the eight natural energies created "this whole universe" (*viśvam idaṃ jagat*; 30f).

Nārāyaṇa goes on to explain that in "this best of times," the Kṛta yuga, "animals in sacrifice are for non-violence (*ahiṃysāḥ*)," but beginning in the next *yuga* their death in sacrifice will be appropriate (73–74). Then, once the gods and Ṛṣis have received Nārāyaṇa's reply to their question about the age-to-age decline of the *dharma* and are told they will not be touched by *adharma* if they "inhabit the region" "where the Vedas, sacrifices, penance, truth, restraint, *ahiṃsā*, and *dharma* are joined together," they all depart for their respective domains—all but Brahmā who "alone remained in place, desirous of seeing that blessed lord who takes on the body of Aniruddha" (77–80). Doing one better, "the god, having assumed the great Horse's Head, appeared to him reciting the Vedas with their limbs, bearing a waterpot and rosary" (81).[30] For once there is no reiteration of the question about *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*; Brahmā seems to have gotten the point. But the Horse's Head, having embraced him, makes one further matter clear: that when the *yugas* decline there will also be a divine response: "'With this burden appointed to you, I will quickly obtain constancy. But when it will be intolerable to bear the work of the gods, I will go into manifestation (*prādurbhāvaṃ gamiṣyāmi*) as guide according to my self-knowledge.' Having thus spoken, the Horse's Head withdrew into himself then and there" (327.84e–85). As Vyāsa now concludes (still, of course, as quoted by Vaiśampāyana), he brings matters back to the central doubt—now resolved:

> Instructed by him, Brahmā also went to his own world without it taking long. So it is that this one of great share, the lotus-naveled eternal one (*padmanābha sanātana*), declared the one who receives first in sacrifices, the eternal upholder of sacrifices, has fixed the law of *nivṛtti*, which is the destination of those whose teaching is the imperishable. He has (also) ordained the laws of *pravṛtti*, having made for the world's diversity. . . . At the end of the *yuga* he sleeps after having retracted the worlds; at the

[29] 327.66; or "teaching of deliverance;" cf. 327.93. This is the title of the *MBh* section in which the *Nārāyaṇīya* appears, so these may be self-referential (but not on simply that account very late) passages.

[30] To handle a waterpot suggests a hand and thus a human body for the Horse's Head; but see below. The Horse's Head "manifestation" or *prādurbhāva* is highlighted in Nārāyaṇa's long speech to Nārada at the end of Part A (326.56 and 94).

beginning of the *yuga* he awakens and creates the universe. Homage to the god beyond qualities . . . who is the peace of all beings, who imparts *mokṣadharma*, . . . who is Kapardin,[31] the Boar, the Unicorn, . . . the Horse's Head . . . , always bearing a fourfold form, the hidden, who is seen through knowledge, the imperishable and the perishable, this undecaying god goes about everywhere, his way unalterable. Just so was this one formerly seen by me with the eye of knowledge.[32] That is all told to you by me truly, as you have asked. May you act, O disciples, according to my word. Serve the lord Hari. Sing his praise with Vedic words. Worship him according to rule. (327.86–98)

Vaiśampāyana thus recalls how Vyāsa enjoined his disciples to sing praise of Hari (by extension, the epic) in Vedic words (*gīyatām vedaśabdaiḥ*). Further, in winding up with a *phalaśruti*, Vaiśampāyana mentions the text's benefits not only to those of the three upper varṇas but also to śūdras and women: hearing it, "a śūdra would obtain happiness. Sonless, one obtains a son, and a maiden a desirable husband. Should she be one whose womb is slow to deliver, a pregnant woman will give birth to a son. A barren women conceives and obtains a wealth of sons and grandsons" (327.104c–5). There is more than meets the eye here. Not only may a śūdra obtain happiness, which can be viewed as something of a condescending cliché; he may do so hearing this Fifth Veda through the *Nārāyaṇīya* that epitomizes the *MBh*. And so, likewise, can women hear this fifth Veda to obtain things they desire. In these details, what is said here implying the *MBh* is very similar to what is said in the Śuka story (12.314–315) (see Hiltebeitel 2001: 294–295).

To summarize then, this first double or triple dip to Vyāsa is quite quick,[33] and it is done in steps through which the questioning and expression of doubt is quadrupled. But at all four levels—Yudhiṣṭhira to Bhīṣma, Śaunaka to Sauti, Janamejaya to Vaiśampāyana, and the five disciples to Vyāsa—the doubts ramify upon the opposition between *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, although they are raised explicitly on that subject only from Śaunaka on, and it is left for Vyāsa's narrative to unfold them most fully in extended oppositions. Within the *Nārāyaṇīya*, *pravṛtti/nivṛtti* is nearly a new topic, there being only one exception in Part A, but an informative one: "Bhagavān said, 'Excellent is this treatise (*śāstra*) you have composed consisting of 100,000 verses, from which proceeds *dharma* for the entire loom of the worlds. As regards both *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, this [text] will be the womb, in agreement with the Ṛg, Yajur, and Sāma, as also the Atharva-Agirasa [Vedas]'" (322.36–37). The authors mentioned here are the seven Citraśikhains, and the text is their primal "Treatise" (*śāstra*). Suffice it to note that it is presented to resemble and anticipate the 100,000-verse *MBh* by its accord with the four Vedas and its teachings about *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, on which Vyāsa and his fifth Veda are now the current ultimate authority—a point Vyāsa brings home in closing when he lets his disciples know that, like Brahmā, he has seen the Horse's Head.

[31] Or, the ascetic with matted locks (Esnoul 1979: 137). At 328.18, a name for Śiva. So too 330.69.

[32] 327.97ab: Vyāsa thereby confirms that he has seen Nārāyaṇa's Horse's Head prādurbhāva.

[33] See Oberlies (1997: 79), taking us through "den abrupten Wechsel der Gesprächsebenen," including the star passages 859*, 860*, 861*, which he translates at 79, n. 24.

FIRST CONTINUATION OF THE SAUTI-ŚAUNAKA DIALOGUE

The *nivṛtti/pravṛtti* opposition is also at the heart of Nārada's movement from White Island, where he has seen Nārāyaṇa, to Badarī hermitage and the company of Nara and Nārāyaṇa—the return journey that launches the movement from Part A to B and presents us with the conundrum of two Nārāyaṇas (see Biardeau 1991), a subject now picked up by a strange question of Śaunaka's in the first resumption of his conversation with Sauti. Since we left it at 12.327, the dip to the dialogue level of Sauti and Śaunaka has continued implicitly, with Vaiśampāyana being recalled as the ostensible speaker by an unmentioned Sauti. But now, once Vaiśampāyana, so quoted, has recounted a great standoff battle between Rudra and Nārāyaṇa (330.44–71), Śaunaka again breaks in: "O Sauti, very great is the narrative recited by you, having heard which, the Munis are all gone to the highest wonder" (331.1). Although Belvalkar makes his second name-change here, suppressing "O Sauti" in favor of "O Brahman" and "Śaunaka" in favor of "Janamejaya," we see clearly for once that M and the M group—Belvalkar's sole support in these changes—have left traces of their work: the "correction" does not make sense. Of the two possible speakers, Śaunaka or Janamejaya, the verse could only come from Śaunaka. Unlike Janamejaya, who can have no business speaking for "all the Munis,"[34] Śaunaka is surrounded by all the Ṛṣis or Munis[35] of the Naimiṣa Forest. Indeed, as the "master of the group" (*kulapati*) or "master of the house" (*gṛhapati*) of the Naimiṣa Forest sages, he is their spokesman (Hiltebeitel 2001: 99, 102–104, 166). But more than just shuffling the names in this verse, the M group[36] now drops nineteen lines. This is its longest elision, and Belvalkar follows it. He demotes these lines to an Appendix, this time with some equivocal support from Grünendahl that I would call faulty.[37] The change in speakers is, of course, a reduction in scale, as becomes further evident in the long elision.

[34] The mss. M1, 5–7 have *yacchrūtveme munivarā paraṃ vismayam āgatāḥ* for line 2, which makes it the "best of Munis" who are filled with wonder, thus not changing anything essential but perhaps showing an awareness of the problem.

[35] E.g., from the very beginning, upon his arrival at Naimiṣa Forest, Sauti "greeted all the Munis, his palms joined" (*abhivādya munīṃs tāṃs tu sarvān eva kṛtāñjaliḥ*; 1.1.4a).

[36] As Grünendahl observes, "another exclusive commonality of K7, D4,9, and M mss." (1997: 51).

[37] The main reason for the excision is clear enough: Sauti's description of Janamejaya's sacrifice (Appendix I, No. 32, lines 12–13) is incorrigible, since it could not be put in the mouth of Vaiśampāyana who is in dialogue with Janamejaya at that very sacrifice. Yet Grünendahl (1997: 51) finds Belvalkar's editing "comparatively unproblematic" (*vergleichweise unproblematisch*) here, reasoning that the M group "constellation probably has much more importance than the 'M-Version' alone," and that this particular passage "shows . . . diverse connections with the idea-historical frame" as defined by his profile of ideas. The latter argument, at least, is circular and rests on his risky criterion of his "profile of ideas" (see n. 8 above).

Indeed, we find that the Critical Edition scales back on what must have been a fuller and more meaningful text that M (followed, I believe, by the M group) has reduced. Let me put this as carefully as possible: such a reduction means that the outer Naimiṣa Forest frame began to lose meaning, or at least importance, to M and the M group for the maintenance of this portion of the *MBh*. I shall return to this point in closing.

But back to the matter of reiterated questions and doubts, it is amid this suppressed material that Śaunaka, speaking on behalf of all the wonderstruck Munis, asks the question that runs through dip two: "The blessed god, adored by all worlds, is hard to see by all the gods including Brahmā, and by the great Ṛṣis and by others. That Nārada would have seen the lord Nārāyaṇa Hari, that is surely due to this god's permission, O Sūta's son. When he had seen the lord of the universe stationed in the body of Aniruddha, if Nārada ran forth immediately again to see the two best of gods Nara and Nārāyaṇa, tell me the reason for that" (App. I, No. 32, lines 5–11). Still within this Appendix, Sauti now tells Śaunaka that Janamejaya also addressed Vyāsa with a variation of this question about Nārada's return to Badarī:

> Sauti said, "While the sacrifice of Parikṣit's royal son was going on, O Śaunaka, while the intervals of the rites were going on as per rule, the Indra among kings asked that Ṛṣi, that receptacle of Veda, the lord Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, his grandfather's grandfather."[38]
>
> Janamejaya said, "When the divine Ṛṣi Nārada had returned from White Island, meditating on the word of the lord, what did he do further? Having arrived at Badarī hermitage, having approached the two Ṛṣis, how long a time did he dwell there, and what story did he ask about?" (lines 12–19)

But Janamejeya receives no reply from Vyāsa here. As the Critical Edition text now resumes, the reply will come from Vaiśampāyana, for this time, rather than quoting Vyāsa, Vaiśampāyana will speak for him by proxy.[39] Immediately upon the conclusion of the excised passage, Janamejaya remains the speaker, continuing with a second use of the churning simile, which now, seen in this context, carries extra force when we realize that it is addressed to Vaiśampāyana not only in Vyāsa's presence but also just before Janamejaya will readdress the question to Vaiśampāyana that he first asked to Vyāsa: "Surely having churned with the churning of your thought (*āmathya matimanthena*) the supreme ocean of knowledge by this hundred thousand-extent narrative of the Bhāratas—as butter from milk, as sandal from Mt. Malaya, as Ārayaṇka from Veda, and as nectar from herbs—so, O Brahman, is this supreme nectar of story that rests on the story of Nārāyaṇa (*nārāyaṇakathāśrayam*) extracted as spoken by you, O treasure of austerities" (12.331.2–4). Janamejaya is in fact simultaneously addressing both Vyāsa and Vaiśampāyana, their thought now churning together.

[38] *Pitāmahapitāmaham*: "grandfather of his grandfather" (App. I, line 15b); Abhimanyu is grandfather of Janamejaya and Vyāsa is grandfather of the Pāṇḍavas, including Abhimanyu's father Arjuna. Presumably in one case "grandfather" has the extended sense of "great-grandfather." See 1.54.15b, where Vyāsa is Janamejaya's *prapitāmaha*, "great-grandfather."

[39] As Ganguli ([1884–96] 1970, vol. 10: 592 n. 1), notes, at least seeing the problem, Janamejaya's questions seem to be addressed to Vyāsa, but "All the editions . . . make Vaishampayana answer."

Yet we find that Grünendahl considers these passages further support for his attempt to deproblematize Belvalkar's elisions of the second dip. Grünendahl argues that where there are doublets between the elided Appendix and what follows it in the Critical Edition text, one passage or the other must be the double, since he views doubling to be a sign of interpolation, with the first doublet often being the interpolated one.[40] But there is more to look at in these reiterations. They occur in three units, each with intervening material. First, as appropriate to a concern with the two sets of interlocutors, the initial doublets make the clearest differentiations:

> App. 32.3ab: *pāvitāṅgāḥ sma saṃvṛttāḥ* *śrutvemām āditaḥ kathām*
>
> Our limbs purified, we are fulfilled having heard from the beginning
>
> App. 32.4cd: *nārāyaṇāśrayam puṇyām* *sarvapāpapramocanīm*
>
> this meritorious story resting on Nārāyaṇa that offers deliverance from all our faults.
>
> 12.331.8ab: *sarvathā pāvitāḥ smeha* *śrutvemām āditaḥ kathām*
>
> Those here are indeed in every way purified having heard from the beginning
>
> 12.331.8cd: *harer viśveśvarasyeha* *sarvapāpapraṇāśanīm*
>
> this story of Hari the lord of all here, that offers destruction of all our faults.

The phrasing is a near-verbatim match in the second *pāda*s or halves of each line, but even there not without a subtle shift: whereas the Naimiṣeya Ṛṣis obtain *release from* all their faults, the attendees of Janamejaya's snake sacrifice obtain *destruction of* all their faults. As to the first *pāda*s in each line, the Naimiṣa Forest sages obtain this release by hearing "the meritorious story resting on Nārāyaṇa," while the attendees at Janamejaya's snake sacrifice reap destruction of their faults by hearing "the story of Hari the lord of all *here*," with *iha* ("here") emphasized twice. These are minor differences, but plausible in conveying a certain spatial intricacy and a differentiation as to the soteriological versus ritual value of the "story" at these different locations—one "elsewhere" and the other "here."

Before we get to the remaining doublets, Janamejaya recalls the good fortune of his ancestors, the Pāṇḍavas, to have had "Viṣṇu" as their "friend" (*sakhā*; 331.10),[41] and then he readdresses the question he asked Vyāsa (in the appended passage) to Vaiśampāyana, putting this "same" question now more elaborately:

> More fortunate than they (the Pāṇḍavas) was Parameṣṭhin's son Nārada. I know the undecaying Nārada to be a Ṛṣi of not just a little splendor, since

[40] Grünendahl (1997: 51); see Oberlies 1997: 75 on repetitions; 119 on doublings.

[41] This is both a Vedic evocation of Viṣṇu as friend of Indra and a recollection of Kṛṣṇa's friendship with the Pāṇḍavas, especially Arjuna.

he reached White Island and saw Hari himself. His viewing (*darśana*)[42] was manifested due to divine grace when he saw the god established then in the body of Aniruddha. When Nārada ran forth to Badarī hermitage to see Nara and Nārāyaṇa, what was the reason? Returned from White Island, Nārada, son of Parameṣṭhin, having reached Badarī hermitage, having approached the two Ṛṣis, how long did he dwell there and what story did he ask for? When that one of very great self had come from White Island, what did those two high-souled Ṛṣis Nara and Nārāyaṇa say? You must relate all that to me truly. (12.331.13–18)

Within this rephrasing are the two doublets with verses in the elided Appendix, with Grünendahl viewing those in the Appendix as interpolated. But here it is appropriate that the phrasing is very close, since the driving point is that they are iterations of the "same question." And there are still slight distinctions.[43]

Finally, beginning his reply, Vaiśampāyana lets us know how his speaking for Vyāsa by proxy works: "Homage to that blessed lord Vyāsa of unlimited splendor, by whose grace I speak (*yasya prasādād vakṣyāmi*) this story of Nārāyaṇa" (331.19). And indeed Vaiśampāyana now uses *iha* similarly to the double usage just cited above at 331.8a and 8c, but now with more precise spatial information: "Reaching White Island and seeing the undecaying Hari, Nārada left, O king, and quickly reached Mount Meru, bearing in his heart the weighty word that was said by the supreme self. After that, O king, a great consternation arose in him. When he had gone a long way, he got back *here* safe (*kṣemī punar ihāgata*). Then he proceeded from Meru to Mount Gandhamādana. Quickly he dropped from the sky toward the broad Badarī" (331.20–22). This *iha* looks at first like it should refer to the location of Janamajeya's snake sacrifice, said to have been Takṣaśīlā. But that is made very unlikely by what follows, which suggests an arrival somewhere "in this world" round about Meru on the way to Mount Gandhamādana for a landing there at the Badarī hermitage of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. From there, what Vaiśampāyana has to tell is of course why Nārada made this fantastic run, which he does by telling two things: first, that immediately upon his return Nārada saw the bizarre physical similarities between the inhabitants of White Island and the Ṛṣis Nara and Nārāyaṇa at Badarī (23–27), whom he calls "the two Puruṣottamas" (29b); and second, Nārada's answer to a question from Badarī Nārāyaṇa: "Is the blessed one, the eternal supreme self, now seen by you in White Island, the ultimate original nature[44] of us two?" (331.35).

[42] Note that Janamejeya now realizes that Nārada's *darśana* of Nārāyaṇa-Hari in Śvetadvīpa is superior to his ancestors' "viewing" of Kṛṣṇa. On *darśana* now as "doctrine," see Schreiner 1997b: 191.

[43] The doublets are App. 32, lines 9–11 / 331.14c–15, and App. 32. lines 18–19 / 331.16c–17b. The first has two little points of emphasis that carry along a differentiation: the Naimiṣeya Ṛṣis' grander scale of vision in using the name Jagannātha, lord of the universe, rather than "the god"; and consistent with what has been said about locations "here" and anon, Janamejaya's greater interest than Śaunaka's in Nārada's arrival at Badarī. In the second doublet, there is only the slight continuing hint that whereas Śaunaka has Nārada "arrive" at Badarī from elsewhere, Janamejaya speaks of his "reaching" it here.

For this second dip, in sum, it is less quick than staggered, and the steps are less obvious than in the first. Once Śaunaka asks the initial question, there is only one clear step between the inner and outer frame, while others are made by allusions, and one never quite reaches the outermost frame except by acknowledging Vyāsa's presence and by Vaiśampāyana's proxying for him. But the underlying question is less diffuse. The theme of Nārada's strange running journey back to this world—which should remind one of Śuka's journey "on foot" from Meru to Mithilā (12.312.12–15; Hiltebeitel 2001: 292)—preoccupies the questioners at each dialogue level. Clearly, the force of the passage is to take the risk of shifting levels again as a means to marking out the relation between the White Island Nārāyaṇa and the Nārāyaṇa who with Nara at Badarī manifests himself "here." Devoted to both, Nārada is thus one of those who can discuss this relation, as he continues to do, distinguishing between the (relatively) "unmanifest" form of Nārāyaṇa and the "manifest" forms of Nara and Nārāyaṇa (331.36–38)—Vyāsa is another, having covered the same itinerary but not with the same motive or urgency.[45] If Nārada's return from Śvetadvīpa is as important as his journey there,[46] as the text clearly considers it to be, and indeed as it must be if we in this world are to know about it, it would seem to be another case where one draws a certain value from considering Part A and Part B together.

SECOND CONTINUATION OF THE SAUTI-ŚAUNAKA DIALOGUE

Nārada's conversation with Nara and Nārāyaṇa extends over *adhyāyas* 12.332–333, with their words strung ostensibly from the inner frame as recounted by Vaiśampāyana (who is mentioned at 333.1–3). It highlights further disclosures of the bewildering identity of the two Nārāyaṇas, and closes with Nārada asking Nara and Nārāyaṇa about the origin of the three *piṇḍa* balls or clods of earth used in ancestor rites, which prompts their joint reply: a story of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa's retrieval of the earth from the ocean as Varāha, the Boar (333.11–23). As Schreiner (1997b: 175) observes, this passage picks up on one of Yudhiṣṭhira's questions at the beginning of the *Nārāyaṇīya* (321.2 and 4)—that is, at the beginning of Part A—concerning what should be offered to gods and ancestors.

From that, the next *adhyāya* (334) leads into the second continuation of Sauti's dialogue with Śaunaka. Initially, Vaiśampāyana returns as speaker to make three points, or more precisely, to allow for three textual moves. First he describe Nārada's

[44] Following Esnoul (1979: 173), for *prakṛtiḥ parā*. Their original nature seems to be from White Island, not Nārāyaṇa (but White Island is *his* original nature; see 321.30, 323.26 especially, and 332.2–5, 12ab.

[45] See 326.123–124 and 327.21–23b, as cited above, though let us note that when Vyāsa obtains the "triple-timed knowledge" from Nārāyaṇa, we do not learn that he *saw* the Śvetadvīpa Nārāyaṇa. While Nārada's itinerary concerns spatial coordinates, Vyāsa obtains temporal ones.

[46] On which there is more to say that cannot be said here, other than it occurs in Part A at 12.322.5–8, and that the coordinates aligning Meru and White Island are vertical: White Island is *above* Mount Meru. Other translators settle for "distance," but *ūrdhvam* (8) means "height."

"intense devotion toward the god, dedicating himself to exclusivity (*atyantabhaktimān deve ekāntitvam upeyivān*) . . . in Nara and Nārāyaṇa's hermitage"[47] for a thousand years, whereafter "he promptly went to Himavat where his own hermitage is" (334.1–2). This is Nārada's exit from the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Henceforth he is mentioned five times, but only as a source for Vyāsa or as indirectly connected with him (334.12; 336.11–12 49–50, 60, 79). Nārada's departure makes way for Vyāsa to be the central Ṛṣi for the rest of the *Nārāyaṇīya*. Second, directly addressing himself to Janamejaya, Vaiśampāyana makes a point about enmity that looks like a complement to what Janamejaya had said earlier, just before addressing Vyāsa but hearing back only from Vaiśampāyana, about the good fortune of his Pāṇḍava ancestors in having had "Viṣṇu" as their "friend": "You (Janamejaya), even of unlimited energy, born in the Pāṇḍava family, are of purified soul now, having heard this story from the beginning. His is neither the other world nor this, best of kings, who by word, thought, or deed should hate the undecaying Viṣṇu. Whoever hates the best of gods, the god Nārāyaṇa Hari, his ancestors sink into hell for eternity. How may he be hated who is the self of the world? The self, O tiger among men, is to be known as Viṣṇu. That is affirmed" (334.4–7). Third, Vaiśampāyana now reveals something that must be meant to be a bit startling, since it has not been revealed prior to this point in the whole *MBh*: "This one who is our guru, the Ṛṣi [Vyāsa], son of Gandhavatī, by him this is told, son, this glorification of the supreme self. From him it was heard by me, and it is told to you, sinless one. Know Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa as the lord Nārāyaṇa. Who else, indeed, could be the maker of the *Mahābhārata*, O tiger among men?" (334.8–9d). Telling Janamejaya now to perform a horse sacrifice, Vaiśampāyana tucks him textually aside, much as he just did with Nārada, to open the way for Sauti to begin the second continuation of the outer frame. Here again Belvalkar, in his editorial work for the Critical Edition, switches names. But with the dip restored, this is how Sauti opens (including a star passage set in brackets): "Sauti said, 'Having heard this great narrative, the king, Parikṣit's son, then began all the rites for the sake of accomplishing the sacrifice. This *Nārāyaṇīya* narrative is told to you by me [892* as asked now, O Śaunaka, here among the residents of Naimiṣa Forest]. Formerly, indeed,[48] Nārada had revealed it to the guru[49] . . .'" (334.11–12d, with the one-line star passage between 12b and c). Belvalkar changes speakers from "Sauti" to "Vaiśampāyana," and eliminates the references to Śaunaka and the Naimiṣa Forest Ṛṣis by excising the star passage. But this time he gets no support from Grünendahl. As the latter observes, Sauti must be the speaker here since Janamejaya's "having heard this great narrative" and his seeing to "all the rites for the sake of accomplishing the sacrifice" require Sauti's first dialogue level to report them (1997: 52). Grünendahl confirms "that the

[47] Note how this again juxtaposes the two and the one.

[48] Rather than *yad vai* here, the Critical Edition sustains the second dialogue level with *rājan*, "O king," as if this were addressed to Janamejaya rather than Śaunaka.

[49] The Critical Edition has *guruve me*, "to my guru," befitting Vaiśampāyana as speaker, but with the *me* wavy-lined as dubious, while most other mss. have *guruve tu*, "to the guru." As Grünendahl (1997: 52) says, it could only be Vyāsa. But Nīlakaṇṭha, with no explanation, has *guruve bhaspataye*; see Ganguli ([1884–96] 1970, vol. 10: 600 n. 2): he thinks it must mean Vyāsa or Vaiśampāyana. As long as it is not "my guru," we can take the words as Sauti's and not have to explain how Vyāsa would be his guru.

text refers to the first dialogue level in . . . 12ab and in the additional line found in all mss. other than M, in which Śaunaka is addressed directly (892*)" (1997: 52). Obviously M deemed 892* both incorrigible and dispensable. For Grünendahl, it is the consideration that Belvalkar supports his reconstitution solely on M, with no support this time from other manuscripts in the M group (52–53), that "overturns the foundational decision he has set forth" (52).

So Sauti now has the podium, and, picking up it would seem on what Vaiśampāyana has just told Janamejaya about Vyāsa, he begins to turn Śaunaka's attention as well to "the guru"—that is, Vyāsa—to whom, as we immediately learn in continuation, Nārada revealed the *Nārāyaṇīya* "in the hearing of the Ṛṣis, Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa, and Bhīṣma" (334.12ef). Here things have begun to get a bit obscure, since we don't know when this colloquy took place.[50] And they remain almost as obscure in the next verse, where, having just referred to Vyāsa as "the guru," Sauti begins to describe "the supreme guru (*paramagurur*)" (334.13a). Although it seems at first that he would still be talking about Vyāsa, the terms in which he continues (13b–17) indicate that he has moved on to a description of White Island Nārāyaṇa (see Ganguli [1884–96] 1970, vol. 10: 600). Yet considering that Sauti is adumbrating on what he would have just reported from Vaiśampāyana, one might imagine—as a possibility—that he is playing on the latter's revelation that Vyāsa *is* Nārāyaṇa. In any case, the ground is prepared for Śaunaka to have his last questions in the three-dip series. Having briefly reviewed what he has heard about Nārāyaṇa's glorification of the supreme self and his having taken "birth in the house of Dharma in the person of Nara and Nārāyaṇa" (335.1), about the "ancient origin of the *piṇḍa* . . . and as to what is ordained concerning *nivṛtti* and *pravṛtti*" (2)—that is, a nice recap of the substance of the two prior dips plus the reference to the *piṇḍa* story, which is after all also a matter of *pravṛtti*—Śaunaka gets to his bottom-line issue:

> And you formerly told about the great Horse's Head of Viṣṇu that consumes *havya-kavya*[51] in the great ocean in the northeast, that was seen by lord Brahmā Parameṣṭhin. Why has this form, this power without precedent among the great powers, been sustained by Hari, sustainer of the worlds, O best of the wise? Having not seen that best of gods before, of unlimited energy, that meritorious Horse's Head, what did Brahmā do, O Muni.[52] This is our doubt (*etat naḥ saṃśayam*), Sauti,[53] born from

[50] On this group, see 336.11, with the phrase "when Kṛṣṇa and Bhīṣma were listening" to Nārada who was responding to "Pārtha." This "Pārtha" looks like it would be Arjuna, who is just mentioned, but see 336.60, where the same basic verse has "Dharmarājñe" ("to the king of Dharma," Yudhiṣṭhira) instead of "Pārtha," and 336.80, where Vyāsa told this explicitly to Dharmaputra. This setting thus recalls 334.12 and 822*, just cited. It does not seem that it could have been during the *Śāntiparvan*. The setting is also mentioned in a passage unattested by the Critical Edition but translated by Ganguli that would close the *Nārāyaṇīya* ([1884–96] 1970, vol. 10: 625).

[51] Probably rites to gods and ancestors, respectively. Oberlies 1997: 150–152 assigns them to a young but still middle stratum among the sacrificial conceptions treated in Part A.

[52] The additional M group mss. K7 and D4,9 have *muniḥ* for *mune*—"what did the Muni Brahmā do?" The vocative *mune* is puzzling, since it is not clear how Sauti would

knowing the *Purāṇa*.[54] Tell, O one of foremost intelligence, what is fashioned by the great Puruṣa. Purified by you, Sauti,[55] tell this meritorious story. (335.3–6)

Sauti says he will do so by recalling how Janamejaya had a doubt about the same question:

> I shall tell you the whole *Purāṇa*, equal to the Veda, that the blessed Vyāsa sang for Parikṣit's[56] royal son.[57] Having heard about this form of the god Harimedha with the Horse's Head, the king had a doubt arise (*utpannasaṃśayo rājā*), and so he pressed him.
>
> Janamejaya[58] said, "That god bearing the Horse's Head whom Brahmā saw, what is the reason that the god took this form?" (335.7–8)

And so we come with this doubt not only to Śaunaka's bottom line question for the outer frame, but to the bottom line of what links the outermost and the inner frames. For this is the only time in the entire epic where Vyāsa, seated as an otherwise silent though not entirely inactive attendee at Janamejaya's snake sacrifice, gives Janamejaya a solely verbal reply.[59]

Vyāsa's *Purāṇa* is a long story (12.335.21–66) about how Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa awakens from his yogic sleep at creation and assumes the form of Hayaśiras, the Horse's Head, to rescue the creator Brahmā, freshly emerged in the primal lotus, from the two demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, who interrupt him as he is in the process of creating the worlds by "first emitting the four Vedas" (25cd). "Having seen the Vedas, those two best of demons, bearing form themselves, then forcibly seized the Vedas in

be a Muni. Usually, and I cannot cite an exception, it refers to a brahman. Perhaps it acknowledges Sauti's wisdom.

53 The Critical Edition has *brahman*, "O Brahman." "Our" doubt likely encapsules Śaunaka's speaking for Ṛṣis.

54 Again, this would be most appropriate for Śaunaka, who knows all the ancient stories Sauti tells him in Book 1 (see *MBh* 1.5.1–3 and Hiltebeitel 2001: 104); it is doubtful that Janamejaya is, at least at this point (i.e., before the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), such a *Purāṇa*-knower.

55 *Saute* occurs in K7 D4,5,9; *sūta* in T G1-3,6. The Critical Edition has *brahman*, "O Brahman."

56 The Critical Edition has *dharmasutasya* (i.e., Yudhiṣṭhira's) wavy lined. *Pārikṣitasya*, with varied formations and spellings, occurs in both southern and northern mss. This would be something Sauti would report.

57 The added M group mss. K7 and D4,9 go to the outer frame here, inserting after verse 7: "I will tell all this to you. Listen, Śaunaka" (839*). M5, however, at the same point refers the exchange to one involving Yudhiṣṭhira and Vyāsa (894*).

58 Rather than the Critical Edition's "Yudhiṣṭhira," varied northern and southern mss. have Janamejaya speaking.

59 The two other times Vyāsa responds to Janamejaya at the latter's snake sacrifice it is primarily through action: when Janamejaya asks him to tell about the "breach" between his ancestors and Vyāsa turns matters over to Vaiśampāyana (1.54.18–22); and when he asks Vyāsa to enable him to see his deceased father Parikṣit just after he has heard how Vyāsa enabled the warriors who died at Kurukṣetra to be seen risen at night from the Gaṅgā by their surviving loved ones (15.42–43).

Brahmā's sight. Then those two best of Dānavas, having stolen the Vedas, quickly entered the Rasā[60] in the great ocean of the northeast" (26–27). The great Ocean is the Milky Ocean, and its northeast is henceforth to be the location of this Horse's Head manifestation of Nārāyaṇa. With the Vedas stolen, Brahmā is stupefied, and heartrendingly deplores their loss. Then he thinks of Hari Nārāyaṇa, lauds him for his aid, recalls how they have cooperated through six prior creations, and implores him to wake up and help him. Nārāyaṇa awakens and by his lordly yoga assumes the vast cosmic form of the Horse's Head:

> Having taken on lunar splendor with a body that had a beautiful nose, having made the auspicious Horse's Head, receptacle of the Vedas, the lord, by his head, then became the sky with the stars and constellations. His long hairs[61] were of the same splendor as the rays of the sun. His two ears were in the hell of downward space (? *avākāśa*), his forehead was the earth as the bearer of beings, the meritorious great rivers Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī were his eyebrows.[62] Soma and Sūrya were his eyes, his nose recalled the twilight, the adornment[63] was the syllable Oṃ, his tongue was fashioned of lightning, the renowned soma-drinking ancestors became his teeth, O king; Goloka and Brahmaloka became the great-souled one's lips. The Night of Time that transcends the strands, O king, became his neck.[64] (44–48)

Thus self-manifested, the Head sets forth for the Vedas' retrieval:

> Having entered the Rasā, he resorted to the highest yoga. Adopting the tone regulated by the rules, he emitted the sound Oṃ. And this sound resonated and was smooth everywhere it went. . . . Then the two Asuras, binding the Vedas together, having hurled them into the Rasātala ran to where that sound was. Meanwhile, king, the god bearing the [form of the] Horse's Head, Hari, grabbed all the Vedas that had gone to the Rasātala, gave them to Brahmā, and then returned to his own nature [of the sleeping Nārāyaṇa as Aniruddha]. After he had established the Horse's Head in the

60 See 12.335.3, 54 on the Rasā in the ocean to the northeast as the location of the Horse's Head.

61 Presumably his mane.

62 335.46cd: *gaṅgā sarasvatī puṇyā bhruvāv āstām mahodadhi*. With *śroṇyau* for *puṇyā*, the Vulgate has "Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī were his hips, the two oceans his brows" (12.347.50ab), but this would be the only mention of a bodily part below the neck. Otherwise, the passage suggests a Horse's Head with nothing below the neck. But cf. 327.81d, cited above, where he holds a waterpot. In illustrating the current passage, the Citraśāla Press edition seems to fudge things, showing a full-bodied Hayaśiras, horse-headed from the neck up, necklaced, but otherwise a typical four-armed standing Viṣṇu bearing a lotus, conch, mace, and *cakra*, but no waterpot. See Kinjawadekar 1929–33, vol. 5, facing page 731.

63 335.47c: *saṃskāra*, a guess; perhaps a forehead mark.

64 The Horse's Head's neck is thus Kālarātrī, the "Night of Time"! Does this imply that he is a a kind of ultimate Aśvamedha head equivalent to the doomsday Brahmaśiras? Cf. Grünendahl's observation that the horse is not slain in the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s story of the Aśvamedha of King Vasu (2002: 327 n. 77).

northeast of the great ocean, the Horse's Head then became the repository of the Vedas (*vedānām ālayas*). Thereupon the two Dānavas Madhu and Kaiṭabha, not seeing anything, again came there. The two speeders looked around where they had hurled the Vedas, but that place was absolutely empty. Then resorting to high speed, the two best of the powerful again quickly rose up from the abode of the Rasā. And they saw that Puruṣa, the lord, the maker of beginnings, white with a radiance of lunar purity, established in the body of Aniruddha; of immeasurable vigor, under the influence of the sleep of yoga, he was defined upon the waters on a bed abounding in serpent coils prepared to his own measure that was surrounded by a garland of flames. . . . The two Dānava lords released a great laugh. Pervaded by rajas and tamas, they said, "This white Puruṣa lies under the influence of sleep. It is he who has taken back the Vedas from the Rasā. . . ." When the two had spoken so, they awakened Hari seeking to fight. . . . Gratifying Brahmā, Madhusūdana slew (them). (12.335.50–64)

These two demons' opposition to Brahmā has thus led to their further opposition to Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu, recalling that the whole passage is prefaced by an evocation of the theme of enmity with this god, and in back of it the theme of friendship with him as well.[65] Meanwhile, Brahmā, having received back the Vedas, is able to fashion all the "mobile and stationary worlds" (12.335.65–66), and Hayaśiras is made the repository of the Vedas in the northeastern ocean where, even though they have so far seemed to be manuscripts,[66] their orality is now clearly primary. Indeed, soon enough Vyāsa emphasizes the Horse's Head as the source and inspiration of oral means of Vedic preservation: "Having praised with fierce *tapas* the god bearing (the form of) the Horse's Head, the sequence (of recitation, *kramaḥ*) was obtained by Pañcāla on the path pointed out by Rāma" (71).[67]

In sum, this third dip is fairly straightforward. Śaunaka is once again positioned to voice the pivotal doubt. And again we find a frame-crossing appeal by Janamejaya to the authority of Vyāsa, with the answer coming this time neither by quotation nor

[65] In Hiltebeitel 2002, I argue that these demons, at least in this version of the myth, provide a figuration of heterodoxy: probably of the Buddhists who oppose the idea of Brahmā as creator and reject the *Mahābhārata*'s view of friendship and enmity.

[66] See Hiltebeitel 2002, discussing the theft, binding, tossing to hell, and retrieval of the four Vedas as implying manuscripts and writing.

[67] See also in the *Nārāyaṇīya* 12.330.31–39, especially 36–38, where it is indeed Kṛṣṇa's grace as the Horse's Head that Gālava of the Bābhru *gotra*, evidently "the high-souled one from Pañcāla," was the first to master the "division of the sequence of syllables" (*kramākṣarabhāgavit*)—that is, the *krama-pāṭha* style of "ab bc cd etc." Vedic recitation—"by the path pointed out by Rāma" (330.36–38). This passage allows some possibilities for dating. According to T. P. Mahadevan, Babhru is mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda Prātiśākhyā*—dated around if not well before Pāṇini (ca. fourth century BCE) at *patala* 10, with more on *krama* in *patala* 11. Earlier in this passage, the *ṚV* is said to have had twenty-one *śākhas* or branches (12.330.32ab), a number mentioned—after other traditions mention the number at five and seven, by Patañjali, usually dated at 150 BCE I thank Frits Staal for this information, and both Staal and Mahadevan for discussions on these matters.

proxy but by Vyāsa himself. Clearly, all this dipping has led to a kind of revelation, in fact, a revelation about revelation: Veda. The three-part sequence is nice enough for us to congratulate the author, whom Vaiśampāyana sets up from the outset of dip three by telling Janamejaya, "Know Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa as the lord Nārāyaṇa. Who else, indeed, could be the maker of the *Mahābhārata*?" (334.9). Who else, indeed, would be so informed about the mysterious Horse's Head![68] With Nārada's *Nārāyaṇiya* exit leaving the focus on Vyāsa, one waits upon the author as a subject to be continued,[69] which he is, notably in *adhyāya* 337 where Vyāsa reveals his double birth, saying, "I am born of that god Harimedhas's grace and named Apāntaratamas, born by Hari's command. And again I am born the celebrated joy of the family of Vasiṣṭha. I have thus told of my former birth. So I am born of a portion of Nārāyaṇa by Nārāyaṇa's grace" (337.54–55). It seems this means that he is a "portion of Nārāyaṇa" in both births. In any case, the name Harimedhas, which surely connects the "sacrificial essence/sap (*medhas*) of Hari"[70] with the horse's head of the Aśv*amedha*,[71] cannot be innocent in the *Nārāyaṇīya*.[72] We have also met it when Janamejaya has his last doubt after he has "heard about the form of the god Harimedha with the Horse's Head" (355.8ab). In terms of Vyāsa's final authority on this remarkable manifestation, which among other things speaks for Vedic orality, it seems that he speaks not only as a "portion of Nārāyaṇa" but from the "Hari-essence" of the Horse's mouth. The theme of appealing to Vyāsa's authority then has one last turn in the *Nārāyaṇīya*, in the next to last *adhyāya*, when Vaiśampāyana bows to him as having taught a single highest Person (Puruṣa) as the origin of all others, and as informed by the *Puruṣasūkta* (338.2–7; cf. Schreiner 1997b, 160)—a perfect example of the "churning" together of *MBh* and Veda.

MAHĀBHĀRATA READING COMMUNITIES

Vyāsa thus tells Janamejaya a way to "read" all the stories in the epic—and more, since the *MBh* famously includes "everything there is" (1.56.33; 18.5.38), it is a way to "read" any and all stories anywhere. It is a meta-statement about the *MBh* and all it encompasses. Obviously it is also a *bhakti* statement[73] about the whole and a meta-

[68] I must reserve some points on this topic for development elsewhere; see Hiltebeitel 2003a.

[69] Grünendahl handles Vyāsa's authorship and links with Nārāyaṇa among the "coinages" of the epic's late coating in conjunction with Part B. For him, Vyāsa has three aspects: this very late author; the proclaimer of the Nārāyaṇa theology, whom he connects with the older Part A; and an older Vyāsa who "appears in numerous places in the epic, at which the [other] two aspects generally are not addressed" (1997: 239–240). A lot hangs on that "generally." I do not think one can correlate separations with strata of textual development; see Hiltebeitel 2001: 32–91.

[70] Perhaps the "tawny/yellow/reddish (*hari*) sacrificial essence."

[71] I doubt that the name Harimedhas is related to Iranian *xvarena*, but see Brockington 1998: 144, 296.

[72] Along with the usage discussed, the name Harimedhas has suggestive uses at 323.12d and 336.28b.

[73] It is gratifying to see Grünendahl now emphasize that *bhakti* (with *darśana* and *pūjā*) is the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s main issue (2002: 319, 328–333), against Oberlies's stress on

statement of the point of view of at least the *Nārāyaṇīya* author. Its author may have made it one of the last contributions to the *MBh*, but I think he was not working in isolation from the others who first composed the epic. In any case, to date the *MBh* archetype disclosed by the Poona Critical Edition, it will help to date the *bhakti*-oriented reading communities for the epic that the *Nārāyaṇīya* helped to shape.[74] Suffice it to say that while there is plenty of evidence for the pre-Gupta date of *bhakti* ways to read the epic (not least in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Buddhacarita*), there is none that I know of for any earlier way of reading the *MBh*.[75] M was certainly among these reading communities, since the *Nārāyaṇīya* was a *bhakti* reading of the epic that M had to consider. Clearly it was important enough for M to change it. But where, when, and why?

In his treatment of Belvalkar's editorial choice to eliminate the outer frame throughout the *Nārāyaṇīya*, Grünendahl is clear that Belvalkar is unconvincing where he bases himself on M manuscripts alone, but he gives him wriggling room where it is a question of the M group, whose testimony has "much more importance" (1997: 51) and is "more convincing" (53). I do not follow Grünendahl in making such a discrimination. Beyond his view that the passages are interpolations and found in a late "surrounding field," I see him offering no other reasons why M group passages should be more weighted in the reconstituted text than those targeted by M. Yet Grünendahl extends the point: "On principle (*grundsätzlich*) it is well to agree with Belvalkar, since he holds such a change to the first dialogue level to be a late redaction-historical appearance. He sees it as an index for the recentness of 'the whole piece' [Part B],[76] and not more. Meanwhile, the content-related/idea-historical indexes mentioned for a redactional connection between the *Nārāyaṇīya* and the *Ādiparvan* give this change a dimension wherein it leaves it to appear little rich in meaning to consider it isolated" (1997: 53; cf. 2002: 334). On the contrary, I believe that even if debate remains as to the dating of the *Nārāyaṇīya* "parts and whole" and its relation to other

sacrifice (1998). But he pushes things too far and thus underestimates the integral thread of sacrifice, evident, just for instance, in the treatment of *pravṛtti*, the Horse's Head (see n. 64), and the name Harimedhas.

[74] In adapting this terminology so richly developed for the *Maṇimekakai* by Anne Monius (2001), I continue to think that the best way to envision the *MBh*'s "empirical author" (the "model author" being another story . . .) is to hypothesize that the *MBh* is written work of composite authorship (Hiltebeitel 2001: 19–35, 169; 2002; forthcoming) that produces a text by which "professional literati" could engage and create "literate audiences" even among "illiterates" through oral performance (see Monius 2001: 35–36; Hiltebeitel 2001, 21–22). Schreiner's notion (1997b) of the *Nārāyaṇīya* as a "dialogical text" provides a promising starting point for envisioning the *Nārāyaṇīya*'s *and* the *MBh*'s *early* "model audience."

[75] Such as Fitzgerald (2001, 2003) is yet to account for in proposing a pre-*bhakti* "main *MBh*."

[76] Grünendahl cites here Belvalkar's long opening note on 12.327–339 (or Part B) in which he laments that he must include these *adhyāyas* at all, comparing them to "another palpable addition which, as being given by all MSS., we could not drop" (1954, Critical Notes: 2226–2227). Belvalkar's main "redaction historical" arguments are to be found in that note.

sections of the *MBh*, I have shown that its change to the outer frame, considered in the isolation of its immediate context in and through Part B, *is in itself* "rich in meaning."

In assessing Belvalkar's work, Grünendahl gives a final sense of how he draws the line between Belvalkar's editorial shortcomings and his occasionally good results:

> Except for Sukthankar's *Schriftartprämisse*, there are not editorial principles to derive from the above examples. The editor works from case to case. . . . It is "higher criticism" speaking. And "plausibility" plays an underestimated role. When subjectivity adds up like this, it calls into question the compulsory text-critical exercises (classification of mss., etc.). Add to this that these foundations sometimes leave us to miss in consequence the excellent decisions made. So, for example, his note to 328.11 ff. (Belvalkar 1954, Critical Notes: 2227) that he would prefer not to include this passage in the constituted text, since Kṛṣṇa here refers to himself, etc. The fact alone that it finds itself in all mss. has stirred him to include it still, but nevertheless—and here again it is the higher criticism speaking as in the last instance—"provisionally closed in square brackets." He argues similarly with reference to the whole second section of the *Nārāyaṇīya* (12.327–339). (Grünendahl 1997: 53–54)

Evidently the combination of Kṛṣṇa and textual reflexivity provides an "excellent" criterion for dismissal. Belvalkar's lower critical work is affected by his higher critical views, but the latter are apparently commendable where they agree with those of their assessor.

This leads to a last point of disagreement—one more with Oberlies (1997: 140–142) than Grünendahl, though the latter shares the premise (1997: 204–221; 2002: 314 n. 19). It is clear in these Part B passages, including the one just mentioned (328.11 ff.) in which Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna about his names, that there would be no possibility of "fanning out" the text into separate units based on the varied names of the deity.[77] From this perspective, it looks as if the long passages of Part A that stress the names Nārāyaṇa and Hari—to the near- but not total absence of Viṣṇu (324.30)—do so because they are telling stories about Śvetadvīpa, a place in which these are simply the names most pertinent to the deity *there*.

Finally, it was in thinking that everything could be "reverted" to one level that Belvalkar made his big mistake—a simplifying misconstrual apparently based on M and still given credence "on principle" by Grünendahl. One can only wonder that critics have never asked *why* a decision to revert to the outer frame would have been made here—at a point near the end of the *Mokṣadharma*, which treats ultimate questions. In fact, the *Mokṣadharma*'s last three units give shape to the authors'[78] parting overview

[77] See Oberlies (1997: 76), citing Hacker (1961). For a different approach of examining how specific names are used in context, see (most recently for her) Biardeau 2002, 2: 317 and *passim*.

[78] I do not follow the author/redactor differentiation that runs through *Nārāyaṇīya Studien*, especially where Oberlies invokes Biblical Criticism (1997: 75–76) and Schreiner describes the work of redactors (1997: 159 and passim) indistinguishably from that of authors. Grünendahl (2002: 332 n. 97) seems to find Brockington's

of at least the *Śāntiparvan*. The final section is an allegorical story that takes place *in* the Naimiṣa Forest (which we thus do not exactly leave) about the many doors to heaven and the best duty of the four life stages (see Hiltebeitel 2001: 19–20, 156): these being connecting themes with the two sections that precede it—the Śuka story[79] and the *Nārāyaṇīya*, both of which take us back to the outermost frame.

Yet there may still be more to learn from what seems to have begun with M. Here I would like to draw on the current work of T. P. Mahadevan, who attempts to link the migrations of two brahmin groups—the Pūrvaśikhas (those with forelocks) and Aparaśikhas (those with topknots to the back)—from north to south India with the north-to-south migrations of the epics. Mahadevan argues that the Malayālam version—long recognized as the shortest version in the Southern Recension, and similar in at least that regard to the shortest Northern Recension versions (the Śāradā and Kaśmīrī)—is connected with those who made the first migration, the Pūrvaśikhas, and that the more inflated other manuscript groupings of the Southern Recension (the Telugu and Grantha manuscripts) reflect the overlay upon M that follows from the arrival of the much later (mainly) Aparaśikha migration. If, as Mahadevan makes to seem very likely, the changes in M are made after the arrival in the south by Pūrvaśikha brahmins, who would have brought a *Mahābhārata* probably close to the Kaśmīrī-Śāradā recension which they fashioned into the oldest Southern archetype and later developed into M in Kerala after (or even during) the so-called Kalabhra interregnum of the fourth to seventh centuries CE (Monius 2001: 3), that would mean that the dip to the outer frame, which M *changed*,[80] would be as old as the departure to the south: possibly as early as the second century BCE, and certainly pre-Gupta. By Mahadevan's reckoning, the M mss. go back to migrations that took place before the Kalabhra interregnum, and probably occurred in the Sangam period. A full study of the M manuscripts is called for, but taking into account what is presently known, one may conjecture that the M manuscript redactors were concerned to make the epic as comprehensible as possible for a new and linguistically different milieu. This would at least provide a common explanation for four things that have been observed so far. In one case noted by Grünendahl, and also discussed by me, M manuscripts make a nice editorial cut to avoid doubling a reference to Mount Kailāsa in accounting for the movements of Śuka. Here we could suspect that the M redactors try for force and clarity.[81] Second, it is a trait that M manuscripts share with the rest of the Southern Recension (and M probably thus originates this trait) of supplying names for characters

distinction (1998: 11) between *sūta* oral reciters and brahmin redactors useful here. But see Hiltebeitel 2001: 13 n. 51, 101: for me, it is always simply brahmin authors (usually as poets).

[79] The *Nārāyaṇīya* refers back to the Śuka story: when Vyāsa tells about his prior birth from Nārāyaṇa as Apāntaratamas, he recalls Nārāyaṇa's prediction that he "will not gain release from affection. And your son, free from affection, will be a supreme soul by the grace of Maheśvara" (337.45c–46d). See 12.320.17–36 (just before the *Nārāyaṇīya*) and Hiltebeitel (2001: 310–312).

[80] Probably in Kerala, since no non-M southern mss. are affected by the change, or "retain" it.

[81] 12.318.63 and 798*. See Grünendahl (1997: 49–50); Hiltebeitel (2001: 301).

left in the Northern Recension without them as part of what Sukthankar calls its demonstration of a "thoroughly practical outlook" (1933: xxxv–xxxvi). Finally, treating the *Nārāyaṇīya* as an especially significant text to modify, M decides, for what looks like simpler solutions, to divide prose and verse sections to create two *adhyāyas* where there were one, and it tries to maintain everything at one familiar dialogue level to get to the bottom-line *bhakti* teachings of Vyāsa without the complications of a dip to the outer frame. If the *Nārāyaṇiya* was important enough to draw such practical solutions, it would be because it was deemed a valued text in shaping new *MBh* reading communities.

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11

Negotiating the Shape of "Scripture"

New Perspectives on the Development and Growth of the *Mahābhārata* between the Empires

James L. Fitzgerald

INTRODUCTION

The Opposition of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti* Does Not Define Bhīṣma's *Anuśāsana*

The *Śāntiparvan* (*ŚP*) of the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh*) has been viewed generally as the principal element of the long series of instructions which Yudhiṣṭhira receives from the dying patriarch Bhīṣma in the wake of the Pāṇḍava victory, immediately after Yudhiṣṭhira's consecration as the Bhārata king. And with regard to the *Śāntiparvan*, most scholarly attention has focused on the instructions of the *Rājadharmaparvan* (*RDhP*) and those of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* (*MDhP*). At first glance it appears that the *MDhP* stands in obviously meaningful juxtaposition to the *RDhP* that precedes it in the *Śānti*. This juxtaposition of didactic corpora in the *ŚP* looks to be a scholastic enlargement of Yudhiṣṭhira's initial rejection of kingship in favor of ascetic withdrawal, at the beginning of the *ŚP*, and the resolution of that dilemma in Yudhiṣṭhira's being persuaded to embrace the kingship of the Bhāratas. The logic of the juxtaposition would seem to be that, in broad parallelism to the sequential progression of the classical four *āśramas*, Yudhiṣṭhira should receive instruction in *mokṣa* once his instruction in *rājadharmas* is complete;[1] that he may pursue *mokṣa* once he has acquitted himself of his responsibilities as a head of household, or, in his case, as king. *Nivṛtti* follows upon *pravṛtti* and a course in timeless Brahmanic ethics—or at least an essential portion of it—is thereby complete.

I myself accounted for the *MDhP* this way in my unpublished dissertation on

[1] By this understanding, the *Āpaddharmaparvan* (12.129–167) is a kind of direct extension or qualification of the *Rājadharmaparvan*.

that text in 1980 (Fitzgerald 1980), but I am now convinced that this approach to the text is too doctrinal and too static. A more historically attuned examination of all three collections of instructions in the *ŚP* strongly suggests that the *RDhP* and the *MDhP* did not enter the *MBh* simultaneously as a topical pair, as a recapitulation of the opposition of householder and renouncer. Also, a reading of the *MBh* that attempts to discern the ideological thrust of the text provides grounds for a new understanding not only of the *MDhP* and the *ŚP*, but of the too often neglected *Anuśāsanaparvan* and the fourth instructional set it contains, the *Dānadharmaparvan* (*DDhP*).

The instructions of the *Anuśāsanaparvan* have often been regarded as negligible because they have been thought to be very late additions to the epic; this view was reinforced by the fact that the distinctiveness of this, the thirteenth book, from the *ŚP*, the twelfth book, is itself not consistently attested in the history of the Sanskrit *MBh* (see Brockington 1998: 131–132, which calls attention to the important evidence of the Kushana-period Spitzer manuscript on this matter; see Schlingloff 1969 and Franco 2004). In the argument I present below I shall suggest that these four anthologies came into existence as one side of a complex process of negotiation between some members of the brahmin elite of northern India and the putative new *brāhmaṇya kṣatra* whom those brahmins wished to coax into a mutually beneficial existence through invoking the "*Great*" *Bhārata*. According to this hypothesis, the more fundamental juxtaposition is between the regulating theme of the *RDhP*, on the one hand, and the consummation of that theme in the *DDhP*, on the other. The core of the *RDhP* promulgates a fundamental charter of *brāhmaṇya* kingship—one with various stipulations of brahmin authority and one that extends the status of *dharma* to various apparently wicked practices of monarchical *nīti*—and the *DDhP* closes the arrangement with a set of texts that are concerned to specify the flow of wealth to brahmins in return for these blessings and their attendant services. The *Āpaddharmaparvan* (*ĀDhP*) and the *MDhP* play critically important auxiliary roles in establishing and clarifying the proper relationships among brahmins, their royal clients, and the larger society in which both the *brahman* and the *kṣatra* must exist and survive. The first of the two middle collections (the *ĀDhP*) provides a defense to those aspects of the basic arrangement that fall below the normal standards in either royal actions or brahminic norms. The *MDhP* provides a profound new rationale for society's privileging and supporting the brahmin elite.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BHĪṢMA'S *ANUŚĀSANA*

Most Sanskrit scholars who work with the *Mahābhāata* (*MBh*)—with a few notable exceptions—understand the epic to have changed and grown across a complex career over quite a long period of time. One of the most important indications of the *MBh's* polygenetic history is the whole set of Bhīṣma's instructions of Yudhiṣṭhira. Across the succession of these instructions there are readily apparent traces of diverse origins among their component subtexts, along with various indications that these subtexts have been deliberately assembled and organized into groups of subtexts and collections of varying kinds as they made their way into Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana*. It is also the case that the set of these instructions—even though they have been skillfully woven together with the epic narrative—give the resulting text, when taken as a whole, a very different tone and profile from the tone and profile of the purely narrative text taken apart from them. To make these observations is not to sneer at the didactic material as "pseudo-epic," nor to argue that the resulting text lacks integrity—quite the contrary. As I have shown in the introduction to my translation of the *Śāntiparvan* (Fitzgerald 2004a): the conception of a "pacificatory instruction" (*praśamana-anuśāsana*) and the consequent instructions in kingship given to Yudhiṣṭhira allowed the grafting of an anti-Mauryan, even anti-Aśokan, charter for *brāhmaṇya* kingship onto the narrative of the great Bhārata war as a part of a major new redaction of the *MBh* that occurred sometime between 200 BCE and 0 CE. Given my understanding of the purpose of the resulting text, the resulting new text is organically unified and effective. The post-Mauryan reworking of the *Bhārata* epic and its continued growth and development until the written Sanskrit text was more or less fixed sometime shortly before or during the Gupta era was one of the most interesting and important cultural processes to occur in the half-millennium "between the empires." I do not find persuasive Alf Hiltebeitel's argument that the text was compiled by a committee working in concert over a relatively short period of time.[2]

In 532/33 CE the *MBh* was referred to as the *śatasāhasrikī saṃhitā* in a land grant made by King Śarvanātha of Uchchakalpa. In light of the text's size being on that order of magnitude then, we can conclude that the 19,000 *ślokas* of the Pune *MBh's* twelfth and thirteenth major *parvans*, the *ŚP* and the *Anuśāsanaparvan* respectively, were certainly present in the *MBh* at that time, and, in all likelihood, with pretty much the same 450 *adhyāyas* of instructions we have today. But while the Kushana-period Spitzer manuscript was aware of a *ŚP*, it did not know an *Anuśāsanaparvan*, at least not as a book distinct from its *ŚP* (the fifteenth *parvan* in its list) or its *Āśvamedhikam* (the sixteenth on its list).[3] While it is quite possible that the material we have now in the distinct *Anuśāsanaparvan* was once included within earlier versions of our current *ŚP*,[4] the arguments I present below argue for exactly the sort of gradual development of this material and its relatively later addition to, and distinctive emergence from, the didactic material appended earlier to the postwar epic narrative that the Spitzer manuscript suggests. In the *MBh* recovered by the Pune edition these instructions occur in four distinct sets, the first three of which are contained in the *ŚP* and the last of which makes up all of the *Anuśāsanaparvan* except for the account of the death of Bhīṣma. First in the *ŚP* is the *RDhP*, which is divided between fifty-five *adhyāyas* of epic narrative and seventy-three *adhyāyas* of instructions on kingship. That set of instructions is followed by the *ĀDhP*, which contains thirty-nine *adhyāyas* mainly dealing with the theme of exceptional forms of *dharma* in situations where the primary

2 Hiltebeitel 2001. See my review article on this book, Fitzgerald 2004c.

3 See Schlingloff 1968: 326–327 and 1969: 338.

4 The Javanese rendition of the *MBh* coincides with the Spitzer ms. in this regard. And the testimony of both al-Biruni and Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī* coincides with regard to the existence of a distinct *Anuśāsanaparvan*: see Dandekar 1966: xxxi–xxxii and xlii–xlvi for the presentation of his findings on this matter in connection with the critical edition. A. Holtzmann's reports on the matter (Holtzmann 1892–95, vol. 1: 188f. and vol. 2: 234f.) are also still worth reading.

forms of *dharma* cannot be observed. The *ĀDhP* is followed by the (*MDhP*), which contains one hundred eighty-six *adhyāyas* dealing with the theme of *mokṣa* and similarly exalted "religious" themes. Finally, there is, in the current *Anuśāsanaparvan*, the *DDhP*, which contains one hundred fifty *adhyāyas* dealing mainly with the forms royal gifts for brahmins should take and various texts directly and indirectly justifying the worthiness of brahmins as recipients of these gifts. Scholars have studied the instructions of the *RDhP* and the *MDhP* with particular care for what they tell us of ancient Indian kingship and various aspects of the development of philosophy and religion, but the second and the fourth sets of these instructions have received only glancing attention. And the four sets of these instructions have received little study as deliberately constructed elements of the *Great Bhārata*, or as a unit of the text that might have developed some kind of overall integrity of its own.

The three instructional collections now included in the *ŚP*[5] differ from each other not only in the governing topic of each, but in their organizational tenor as well. There are also significant variations of organizational tenor *within* the three anthologies, especially in the first two. Additionally, each of the first two anthologies contains within its formal bounds a small group of texts that belong, in fact though not in name, to the topic of the following anthology. As one surveys these continuities and discontinuities all together, one is struck by a series of layers of the component sub-texts of the three anthologies, layers that demonstrate a very clear progression from the tightly woven probable core of the didactic portion of the *RDhP* (12.67–90) to the more loosely woven gigantic *MDhP* and into the seemingly very relaxed *DDhP*. The particular qualities of these organizational traits and the existence of these miniature proto-anthologies in *RDhP* and *ĀDhP* also point to the great likelihood that these collections developed gradually, in phases over a relatively long period of time.

A Bird's-eye View of the Three Anthologies

There is a seeming core of texts in the *RDhP* from 12.67 through 12.90 that treat fundamental aspects of *brāhmaṇya* kingship directly, succinctly, and comprehensively.[6] These thirty-four texts exhibit a tautness that is noticeably lacking in all other parts of Bhīṣma's instruction of Yudhiṣṭhira. There is a progressive loosening of editorial integration as we go from the first half of the *RDhP* into its second half, from there into the *ĀDhP*, from there into the *MDhP*, and finally into the relatively very relaxed *DDhP*. As the instruction progresses, the relatively tightly organized sections of single-chapter lessons found in 12.56 through 12.90 give way to looser aggregations of texts that include longer, multichapter recitals. While even the

[5] In the *RDhP* the instructional set begins at 12.56 and continues across seventy-three *adhyāyas* through 12.128. It is my impression that the *DDhP* also has a distinct character of its own in this regard, but I have not studied it in the depth and to the extent required to form a reliable sense of the matter.

[6] Most of the paragraph following has been taken, with slight modification, from the introduction to my translation of the *Śāntiparvan* in Fitzgerald 2004a: 148–149. Tables 11.1 and 11.3 reproduce Tables 4 and 6 on pages 150–151 and pages 163–164, respectively, of the same.

"core" of the *RDhP* instruction set seems definitely to have been assembled from preexisting texts, this portion of the collection was not simply a loose compilation of such material. A significant effort was made to weave the elements into a (relatively) seamless text that appears as a genuine dialogue between Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira. Few of its instructional units consist of more than one chapter, far different from the arrangement of the *MDhP*, quite different from the *ĀDhP*, and different too even from the latter half of the *RDhP*. The framed, multichapter texts which become progressively more frequent in the *Śāntiparvan* after 12.90 occasion a slackening of the Bhīṣma-Yudhiṣṭhira frame. The longer and more involved a given recital is, the more the frame recedes from the consciousness of the audience. While the Bhīṣma-Yudhiṣṭhira frame in 12.56–90 is definitely an artificial frame, we are reminded of it often, and it retains some narrative vitality. The farther we move in the *Śāntiparvan*, the more the frame seems just a device. In the *MDhP* the Bhīṣma-Yudhiṣṭhira frame often fades from sight, and once it is even discarded.

Table 11.1 presents a map of part two of the *Rājadharmaparvan*, the instructional set, 12.56–128. The *RDhP* is the eighty-fourth *upaparvan* of the Pune text and this map includes segmentations of the collection I have distinguished and the labels for these segments I have employed in my translation of this material. (Segments marked with an asterisk are texts that are not joined in any clear thematic way with neighboring texts; with the exception of the first four *adhyāyas*, these segments of the collection are single *adhyāyas* standing alone.)

TABLE 11.1. THE SIXTY-SIX TEXTS OF THE *RDhP ANUŚĀSANA*

Segment (in my translation)	*Title*	*Chapters*
	Bhīṣma's Instructions on the Laws for Kings	12.56–128
*	The basic virtues of kings (both harshness and mildness; vigorous exertion) and the origins of the science of policy and kingship	12.56–59
84f	Permitted and Prohibited Occupations and Life-Patterns (The laws for the different Orders of society and the different Religious Patterns of Life)	12.60–66
84g	The Nature and Character of Kingship (The importance of kings and their duties [protection, punishment, policy]; the divinity of kings [in 12.68])	12.67–71
84h	Kings and Brahmins (Section contains an introductory text and two subsections comprising	12.72–79

Segment (in my translation)	Title	Chapters
	four and three texts, respectively)	
84h–1	The Necessary Complementarity of *Kṣatriyas* and Brahmins	12.73–76
84h–2	Good and Bad Brahmins and the King's Responsibilities toward Them	12.77–79
84i	The Servants of the King (The attributes of good ministers)	12.80–86
84j	The Fortified City, Economics, Taxation, and Treasury	12.87–90
84k	The Song of Utathya (On the high nature and character of kingship)	12.91–92
84l	Law, Force, and War (Section contains eleven texts, including the three-chapter text 84l–1 at its beginning and 84l–2 [which contains two texts in three chapters] at its end)	12.93–107
84l–1	The Song Sung by the Seer Vāmadeva to King Vasumanas (Kings must be devoted to Law, treat conquered enemies with respect, be kind to their subjects, conquer and control their own spirit, and win people over with Law rather than violence)	12.93–95
84l–2	The Conquest of One's Enemy by Indirect Methods (On the nonviolent conquest of one's enemy; made up of two texts, one of which, 84l–2a, is a three-chapter text	12.104–107
84l–2a	The Sage Kālakavṛkṣīya's Instruction of Prince Kṣemadarśa of Kosala (On the subversion of one's enemy)	12.105–107
*	After recapitulating the topics of instruction to this point, Yudhiṣṭhira asks about elitism ("secrecy") in kingless tribal federations (*gaṇas*, "republics"). Bhīṣma discusses the political dynamics of such structures and says some elitism is necessary	12.108
*	Bhīṣma teaches that the central and essential Law is to honor one's parents and teacher, especially one's mother	12.109

Segment (in my translation)	Title	Chapters
84m	Discerning Reality behind Surface Appearances in Difficult Circumstances	12.110–115
84n	The Servants of the King, Part 2	12.116–119
*	General advice on kingly prudence, including the analogy of the peacock	12.120
84o	The Origin of the Rod of Punishment	12.121–122
*	General advice on the king's pursuit of the Group of Three (*kāma, artha, dharma*)	12.123
*	A lesson given by Dhṛtarāṣṭra to Duryodhana: The demon Prahrāda took Royal Splendor (Śrī) from Indra because he was virtuous; Indra regained Royal Splendor by taking Prahrāda's virtue	12.124
84p	The Song of the Seer Ṛṣabha (On the hope and disappointment of Dharma; contains the story of Skinny)	12.125–126
*	Yama, who is Dharma, teaches the seer Gautama that one should honor one's parents every day and worship the Gods with Horse Sacrifices that are replete with presents for the priests	12.127
*	With reluctance, Bhīṣma speaks of the "obscure" Law for situations of distress	12.128

Regarding the *RDhP*, I make the following observations and developmental hypotheses:[7] 1) There is a fairly tight formal and thematic progression in the Bhīṣma-Yudhiṣṭhira *RDhP* collection in the twenty-four *adhyāyas* of 12.67–12.90, that is, segments 84g,h,i, and j. These twenty-four *adhyāyas* may have formed the original core of the instructional dialog. 2) That 12.60–66 (which presents a version of *varṇa* and *āśramadharma* that is unusual, not as cut and dried as many other examples) was placed in front of this core and 12.91–92 (a single text of two *adhyāyas* arguing for the need of a king's exercising force in society) followed by 12.93–107 (fifteen *adhyāyas* that treat, with some ambivalence, the subject of warfare and conquest) were appended behind it. 3) 12.59 (which contains Yudhiṣṭhira's fundamental question regarding kingship and, eventually, the Pṛthu story) and 12.56–58 were then prefaced to the

[7] See the discussion in Fitzgerald 2004a: 146–152.

whole; 12.108 was set as a conclusion and 12.109, praising respect for one's parents and teachers as a conclusion.[8]

These reflections lead to the following schematic model of the development of the *RDhP*.

TABLE 11.2: THE DEVELOPMENTAL LAYERS OF THE *RDhP*–1

Layer of RDhP	*Chapters*	*Phase of Development*
RDhP outer layer 1	56–60	3
RDhP periphery 1	60–66	2
RDhP core	67–90	1
RDhP periphery 1	91–107	2
RDhP outer layer 1, ending with coda 1	108–109	3

A periphery of substantial teachings was added on both ends of an original core of teachings of *brāhmaṇya* kingship. Some introductory teachings and concluding teachings, were added, including a coda praising one's obligations to one's parents. The column of numbers referring to the "Phase of Development" of a given layer refers to the relative order of insertion into the *ŚP* as a whole. They are of course highly speculative, but may prove to be of heuristic value.

Sometime after this set had been complete for a time it came to be extended in three layers and was eventually concluded for a second time with 12.127 and 128. Perhaps 110–128 is all or some portion of a parallel set of *rājadharma* instructions that was added en mass at some point.

12.110–115 constitute some kind of proto-*āpaddharma* to deal with the obvious discrepancies between the ideals of *dharma* and the departures from it in the practices of the king and some of the *santaḥ*. 2.116–126 is a kind of "follow-on" instruction in *rājadharma* that grew by the addition of texts subsequent to the "first edition" just suggested.[9] 12.127, which contains a strong statement about the importance of honoring one's parents, formed the conclusion of this secondary *Rājadharmaparvan*. And finally, 12.128 was composed as a deliberately constructed introduction to the topic of *āpaddharma* and to the full *āpaddharmaparvan*, which was now formally appended to the *Rājadharmaparvan*.

[8] A theme also stressed in some of the Aśokan edicts.

[9] I speculate that phase five is when the main portion of the *ĀDhP* was added to the *RdhP*, which then consisted of 12.56–109 augmented by 12.110–15. Phase six sees the addition of several layers of text between that *RDhP* and the nascent *ĀDhP*, including Bhīṣma's remarkable speech introducing the "obscure matter" of *āpaddharma* in 12.128.

TABLE 11.3: THE DEVELOPMENTAL LAYERS OF THE *RDhP*–2

Layer of RDhP	*Chapters*	*Phase of Development*
Proto-ADh	110–115	4
RDhP Extension 1: retainers	116–119	6
RDhP Extension 2: *nīti* and psychology	120–126	6
RDhP Coda 2:	127	6
Transition to *āpaddharma*	128	6

When we follow this thread into the *ĀDhP* we find the following: the overall structure of this *parvan* is even more relaxed than that of the second half of the *rājadharma* collection (12.91–128): it exhibits (only) three thematic groupings of texts at different locations in the collection,[10] and over a third of its thirty-nine chapters (i.e., sixteen) are contained in just four of its twenty-seven component texts. Of these four multichapter framed texts,[11] one includes five chapters, and another, six. The longest subtexts among the sixty-three in the *RDhP* were two that were only three *adhyāyas* in length; in the *MDhP*, texts of six and more *adhyāyas* are not unusual, including one of twenty-four *adhyāyas*, another of nineteen, and one of fourteen.

Table 11.4 presents an overview of the *ĀDhP*, the eighty-fifth *upaparvan* of the *MBh*. It reproduces table 6 of my introduction to the translation of the *ŚP*.

As noted in connection with the *RDhP*, larger framed items in the collection tend to diminish the sense of the Bhīṣma-Yudhiṣṭhira setting. And as is the case of the *RDhP*, the longer items of the *ĀDhP* do not occur in the first portion of the collection, but only in the middle or toward the back of the collection, after a (relatively) more tightly integrated beginning. With the *MDhP*, this differentiation of the front and the back of the anthology is less clear. The eleven-*adhyāya Bhṛgubharadvājasaṃvāda* occurs near the front as the eighth text of the collection, and the longest subtext, the twenty-four-*adhyāya Śukānupraśna*, occurs as the twenty-eighth of the sixty-three texts. On the other hand, the last four subtexts of the sixty-three comprise forty-four of the 186 *adhyāyas* of the collection. I do not have the counts for the *DDhP*.

[10] Four texts on *nīti* themes at 12.135–138, two texts dealing with Viśvāmitra's eating dog meat at 12.139–140, and six texts on *mokṣa* themes at 12.152–157.

[11] *MBh* 12.141–145, "The Conversation between the Pigeon and the Fowler"; 12.146–148, "The Story of King Janamejaya's Accidental Brahmicide"; 12.150–151, "The Conversation of the Wind and the *Śalmali* Tree (and Nārada)"; 12.162–167, "The Story of the Ungrateful Brahmin."

TABLE 11.4. THE TWENTY-SEVEN TEXTS OF THE *ĀPADDHARMAPARVAN*

Subtheme	*Title or Contents*	*Chapters*
nīti	What the king can do when the enemy threatening him is much more powerful	12.129
Brahmins	The special situation of brahmins in degraded times; the importance of the "power of insight"	12.130
dasyus	Relations with barbarian tribes, bringing them under law	12.131
Brahmins	The king needs Law (and brahmins) always.	12.132
dasyus	Even barbarians can become Lawful.	12.133
Brahmins and *dasyus*	Royal "treasure" is wealth expropriated from *dasyus* and nonritualists and transferred to ritualists or used for their benefit.	12.134
nīti	Parable on foreseeing danger and acting in good time to avoid it	12.135
nīti	Parable on the pragmatic and transitory nature of alliances	12.136
nīti	Parable on certain enmities which are permanent	12.137
nīti	General wisdom on a king's prospering	12.138
Brahmins and *dasyus*	Against the (basically correct) *dharma*-advice of a barbarian, the brahmin Viśvāmitra eats dog-flesh during a time of famine.	12.139
Brahmins and *dasyus*	Bhīṣma justifies Viśvāmitra's exception, argues the necessity of the "insight," condemns hypocritical brahmins who lack practical sense and make *dharma* into an object of scorn, commands Yudhiṣṭhira to imitate Viśvāmitra's "fierceness" in coercing barbarians to live according to *dharma*.	12.140
dasyus, altruism, expiation	(85a) Parable of the pigeons and the barbarian fowler: Exemplifies ultimate altruism even for one's mortal enemy when he is in need; demonstrates that barbarians can leave their vicious ways, expiate their evils, and perform Meritorious Law	12.141 –145
Brahmins, expiation	(85b) King Janamejaya's brahmicide: Inadvertent sins can be expiated, even brahmicide (though some authorities will not agree).	12.146 –148
Optimism	Story ultimately illustrating that Śiva's power always provides grounds for optimism, even when a beloved child is dead	12.149
nīti	(85c) Parable counseling humility before superior power	12.150 –151

Subtheme	*Title or Contents*	*Chapters*
mokṣa	Six texts on various subthemes of *mokṣa*	12.152 –157
Unexceptionable behavior	Vicious men are intractable, and one should simply avoid them	12.158
Brahmins and expiations	Problematic behavior among brahmins and other Aryans and the expiations for them	12.159
Unexceptionable behavior	Bhīṣma tells Nakula how the sword was produced from the fire at a sacrifice done by Brahmā to relieve the gods of the burden of the Law-flaunting Asuras; how it passed to Rudra and others down to the Pāṇḍavas.	12.160
mokṣa	Speaking to his brothers, Yudhiṣṭhira praises *mokṣa* over the other *puruṣārthas*.	12.161
Unexceptionable behavior	(85d) Parable arguing that ingratitude has no expiation while also demonstrating the noble altruism of *dharma*	12.162 –167

Furthermore, like the *RDhP*, the *ĀDhP* includes a set of texts that anticipates the next anthology in the series of Bhīṣma's instructions, namely, the *mokṣadharma* collection. The six chapters 12.152–157 consider such questions as the root cause of evil deeds (greed, according to 12.152) and the very best behavior of Law (self-control, *dama*, according to 12.154), and they expound on such themes as the tremendous value and power of asceticism (*tapas*, in 12.155). These are themes that properly belong in the upcoming *MDhP*, and their presence here suggests (as the presence of an *āpaddharma* section in the *RDhP* also suggested in that case) that there was a gradual development of ideas as the thinkers responsible for composing and collecting the subtexts of Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana* thought through certain key issues. Table 11.5 presents a generalized map of the *ĀDhP* and its developmental layers.

TABLE 11.5: THE DEVELOPMENTAL LAYERS OF THE *ĀDhP*

Layer of ĀDhP	*Chapters*	*Phase of Development*
Main	129–151	5
Proto-MDhP	152–157	7
ĀDhP Extension 1: Remediable and non-sins	158–160	9
Anticipation of *MDhP*	161	10
Extension 2: Concluding parable arguing value of and dangers in latitudinarianism	162–167	11

And Table 11.6 gives a very generalized map of the *MDhP*, most general features of which have already been mentioned. Of course in both these latter maps, the numbers indicating "Phase of Development" are even more speculative than they were for the *RDhP*. Complicating the map of the *MDhP* even more, several texts are sprinkled here and there in the collection that have only a tangential relationship to the way in which *mokṣa*-related themes are typically developed in the *mokṣa* anthology. I refer to a few texts that seem to have as their primary goal the glorification of Śiva, or more commonly Viṣṇu, and a couple of others.[12] Of course the unusual *Nārāyaṇīya* is a sectarian Vaiṣṇavite text as well, but it does take up, in its own devotional and narrative ways, the kind of soteriological and ethical themes most of the rest of the *MDhP* does.

TABLE 11.6: THE DEVELOPMENTAL LAYERS OF THE *MDhP*

Layer of MDhP	*Chapters*	*Phase of Development*
Mixed *mokṣa* sermons	168–174	8
Mixed philosophical treatises	175–212	8
Mixed ethical sermons, with 5 texts presenting dialogues between Indra and an Asura (and, sometimes, Śrī)	213–223	8
Comprehensive cycle of Vyāsa's philosophical and ethical instructions of Śuka	224–247	8
Mixed presentations on death, suffering, violence, and *ahiṃsā*	248–264	12
Mixed philosophical and ethical treatises	265–288	12
More highly technical philosophical and ethical presentations centered upon Sāṃkhya-Yoga and *karmayoga*.	289–308	13
Three texts give more of Śuka's education and his final escape	309–320	14
Nārāyaṇīya	321–339	16
Concluding parable on nobility of living by gleaning	340–353	15

12 12.186 (*ācāravidhi*), 200 (*sarvabhūtotpatti*), 201 (*diksvastika*), 202 (*viṣṇu-bhūmikrīḍa*), 274 (*jvarotpatti*), 272–273 (*vṛtravadha*), and 278 (*bhavaśukrasaṃvāda*).

This survey points not only to the diachronic development of the *ŚP* as a whole but also to the same for at least the *RDhP* and the *ĀDhP*, and likely for the *MDhP* as well. Furthermore, the inclusion of a proto-*ĀDhP* in the *RDhP* and a proto-*MDhP* in the *ĀDhP* not only suggests a progressive development in the thinking of the men developing the whole of Bhīṣma's instruction, but also constitutes fairly conclusive evidence for there being some significant diachronic separation between the inclusion of the proto-collection and the appending of the corresponding full collection. If Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana* had been compiled by a committee working in concert over a relatively short period of time, as Alf Hiltebeitel (Hiltebeitel 2001) has suggested, it would not make much sense that these proto-collections would have remained apart from their corresponding full collections. Likewise, the *ĀDhP* and the *MDhP* would also likely have tighter internal organization after the manner of the "core" of the *RDhP*, 12.67–90.

THE IDEOLOGICAL ENTERPRISE OF THE ANTI-MAURYAN *MAHĀBHĀRATA*

The *MBh* as a whole can shed important light on the development of the four anthologies of Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana*. The anti-Mauryan redaction of an older *Bhārata* epic was accomplished by certain individuals with serious purposes in mind, and we can read the postwar instructions in light of those agents and those purposes. This redaction of the *MBh* advances an ideology of society, authority, and rule that is reflected directly in the *RDhP*, and which helps explain the development of the other three anthologies. In earlier writings[13] I have described—with varying degrees of generality or specificity—the larger ideological enterprise of this "main *MBh*,"[14] which I believe was fashioned and promulgated sometime in the second or first centuries BCE as a reaction against the cosmopolitan "marginalization" of brahmins under the Mauryans, under Aśoka in particular. So I offer below a succinct sketch of this reading of the "main *MBh*." As I will argue, the main narrative of the epic centers upon the chartering of a paradigm of kingship in which the armed ruler subordinates himself to brahmin authority and uses some of his power to serve brahmin interests.

13 I have developed this argument mainly in the introduction to the translations of the *Strīparvan* and *Śāntiparvan* in Fitzgerald 2004a. Part of the latter introduction appeared in a special issue of *Rocznik Orientalistyczny:* Fitzgerald 2001. This argument was also presented in part in my survey and discussion of the Rāma Jāmadagnya thread of the *MBh* in Fitzgerald 2002. More generally argued is Fitzgerald 2004b.

14 I refer to this redaction of the text as the "main *MBh*" (and in this I intend only the Sanskrit *MBh* tradition) because I suspect this redaction was the one that gave the work as a whole the shape and direction that it retained ever after. That is, while I believe there were additions and modifications made to it in the centuries prior to its general finalization in Gupta times, I believe none of these radically altered its basic form. I think the most significant modification the epic underwent in these centuries was its leavening with *bhakti* themes and the extended temporal perspectives of the *kalpa* and *yuga* theme.

The epic's main narrative is framed and supplemented by narratives that detail brahmin grievances regarding rulers, particularly the ambiguous and troubling history of Rāma Jāmadagnya, the brahmin who became a serial annihilator of kṣatriyas and who was banished to the Western fringe of the subcontinent for depriving the earth of kings. The four didactic anthologies that form part of the "*Great*" *Bhārata* at the juncture where Yudhiṣṭhira actually becomes king of the Bharatas carry forward the general agenda of chartering *brāhmaṇya rājya*, and they do so in complex and interesting ways that offer a number of insights into a general situation for brahmins that differs greatly from the static model of *sanātana dharma*. Directly and indirectly these anthologies provide indications of some brahmins' sense of vulnerability and fragility in a world full of threats and skepticism about their value.

Two Operating Assumptions about the *MBh* as a Whole

Before proceeding, however, let me state clearly two assumptions that operate in the background of what I write. First, I do not think that the main *MBh* was regulated exclusively and entirely by the ideological program I see operating in it. The text we have seems actually to be polyphonic by virtue of the sophisticated fascination for multiple meanings of some of its likely authors and also because of its complicated history. Second, regarding the history of the epic: it is my belief that many elements of a heroic narrative centering upon a great Kuru-Pañcāla war existed before the "main," anti-Mauryan, *brāhmaṇyarājya* -chartering *MBh* was composed; that the anti-Mauryan *MBh* represents an artistic and ideological transformation of such a preexisting heroic narrative. This post-Mauryan, anti-Mauryan, *MBh* is the "main *MBh*" (in the written Sanskrit *MBh* tradition) because it fused the Pāṇḍava epic narrative, the main supplemental narratives, and the ideological and didactic kernels of Bhīṣma's instructions into a meaningful whole. I believe the "main *MBh*" grew in the four or five hundred years between the fixing of the main *MBh* and its recognition as a *śatasāhasrikī saṃhitā* during the Gupta era,[15] but the primary forms of its growth were not haphazard. I expect that much of this expansion and augmentation was the plausible extension of one or another theme or motif present in the text and much of it—including the *bhakti* elements—was carefully designed and implemented. And while narrative continuity was always an important principle, I do not think there was ever any notion that the finished product needed to appear as a stylistically seamless whole.

Since I put so much stress on the concept of the anti-Mauryan "main *MBh*," I will extend the statement of this second assumption by giving an informal sketch of what I have in mind with that term. By the "main *MBh*" I mean to suggest the Pāṇḍava epic with most of its familiar narrative elements, including the difficulties of the

[15] The Kushana-period Spitzer manuscript's partially legible list of *Mahābhārata parvans* is strong evidence that there did exist written versions of the *MBh* quite different from the one uncovered in the course of the critical Pune edition of the *MBh*. Evidently the tradition uncovered by Sukthankar and his colleagues eclipsed fairly thoroughly the version of the epic known to the Spitzer manuscript. See Schlingloff 1969 and Franco 2004.

Bhārata lineage in extending itself,[16] the burning of the house of lac, the marriage of Draupadī, the history of the doomed Karṇa, Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya, the dicing match, the forest exile, the frame of the *tīrthayātrā*, the incognito among the Matsyas,[17] the eighteen days' war organized by the four quasi parricides of the *senāpatis* and rife with the "devious tactics" (*jihmopāyas*) of Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas, the "persuasion of Yudhiṣṭhira" after the war and his *abhiṣeka* and his Aśvamedha, most of the events of the *Āśramavāsikaparvan* (including the *putradarśana*) and the *Mahāprasthānika* and *Svargārohaṇika parvans*. Some kernel of Bhīṣma's instruction of Yudhiṣṭhira was certainly present. Was the Vaiśaṃpāyana frame with Janamejaya's snake sacrifice and the *aṃśāvataraṇa* listing present? I think so, including Kṛṣṇa's incarnating a portion of Nārāyaṇa Vaikuṇṭha. Also, at least some elements of the Rāma Jāmadagnya saga must have been used to frame some of the epic, probably the mention of it connected to the *aṃśāvataraṇa* frame and the two instances that frame Yudhiṣṭhira's quest for super kingship?[18] What I believe was probably added sometime between 50 CE and 350 CE, in one or more waves of deliberate expansion and augmentation, would be much of the material in Bhīṣma's instructions, the essential portions of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, all

[16] Among other elements of meaning, Bhīṣma's vow, Vicitravīrya's failure to engender sons, and then Pāṇḍu's forced infertility afforded an author or editor wide scope to graft the main actors of the *MBh* story we know onto an older Kuru-Pañcāla war epic.

[17] The Spitzer manuscript *parvan*-list definitely lacked a *Virāṭaparvan* as one of the top-level *parvans* of the epic it knew (Schlingloff 1969: 336 and 338). But this fact does not preclude the existence of some version of the incognito episode contained within some portion of the narrative between the Pāṇḍavas' *vanavāsa* and the war preparations. And in fact the Spitzer list of *parvans* gives this intriguing succession of *parvans* according to Schlingloff's reconstruction (bracketed letters being reconstructions): *āraṇyakam* 7, *ā{raṇeyam}* 8, *{ni}ryāṇam* 9, *bhaga{vad}yānam* 10, *bhīṣmaparvan* 11. It is easily imaginable that the Spitzer "*niryāṇa*" *parvan*—the ninth of its eighteen *parvans* and the one following upon what may well be a version of the current *Āraṇeyaparvan*, the final *upaparvan* of the current *Vanaparvan*—could refer to some narrative element of an early version of what we now find in the *Virāṭaparvan*. The word *niryāṇa* could refer to the Pāṇḍavas' leaving the forest, or their finally acquitting the terms of their wager with the Kauravas, or their "disappearance," or the setting out of the Kaurava army on the cattle raid against the Matsyas that is detailed in our current *Virāṭaparvan*. In our current *MBh* the name designates a book that describes the setting out of the armies of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas for the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. But one reason to question the reference contained in the name is that, in the Spitzer list, this *niryāṇa* of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava armies would precede the embassy of Kṛṣṇa to the Kaurava court that is told in the *Bhagavadyānaparvan*. Schlingloff suggested that this transposition of these two names (both *upaparvans* of our current *Udyogaparvan*) might be due to scribal confusion (Schlingloff 1969: 335, n. 6), but there is no real need to impugn the evidence in this way.

[18] I refer to Kṛśṇa's references to Rāma's kṣatriya remnant just prior to the launching of Yudhiṣṭhira's quest for the kingship at 2.13.2 and his telling Yudhiśṭhira the story of Rāma's vendetta, his banishment to Śūrpāraka by Kaśyapa for depriving the Earth of kings, and the creation of new kings from hidden remnants of the *kṣatra* (in 12.48–50).

episodes that elaborate some theme of devotion to Viṣṇu, Śiva, or Kṛṣṇa (such as, for example, the Śiśupālavadha in *Sabhāparvan;* Arjuna's and Duryodhana's attending upon Kṛṣṇa and choosing, respectively, for aid in the war, Kṛṣṇa and his Nārāyaṇa warriors at *Udyogaparvan* 7; and several highly polished expressions of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* in the narrative wake of Yudhiṣṭhira's *abhiṣeka* in 12.40 up through the initiation of Bhīṣma's instruction of Yudhiṣṭhira in 12.56). What of the terrifying massacres in the *Khāṇḍavadahana* and in the *Sauptikaparvan?* What of the *Nalopākhyāna* and the *Ambopākhyāna?* And the three tests put to Yudhiṣṭhira by his father Dharma? These elements are difficult to place. The polyphony evident in the received text makes analysis very difficult in the face of the scarcity of our knowledge of the details of the relevant historical contexts. But the difficulty of making reasoned determinations about these matters does not invalidate the potential value of a careful mapping of the various narrative and thematic threads of the vast epic. Several times during the proximate time period of the *MBh's* creation and growth the qualifier *mahā-* (signifying "big, large, great, vast, capacious," and even "universal") was appended to one cultural structure or another, such as, Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* commentary on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the self-styling of the Mahāyāna in opposition to the so-called Hīnayāna, the *Mahāvaṃśa*, and the *Mahāprajñāparāmitasūtra*. At which stage of its growth was a putative *Bhārata* epic story recast as the *"Mahā" Bhārata* and in what senses did those who made it *"mahā-"* want it to be perceived as such?[19]

The Demonization and Destruction of the *Kṣatra* in the Epic's Frames

The written Sanskrit *MBh*, as we have it from the epic's frame-narratives (the *aṃśāvataraṇa* coupled with the stories of Rāma Jāmadagnya and Janamejaya's genocidal snake sacrifice), is basically a story of the apocalyptic destruction of the armed stratum of society. It is the story of a divinely planned purging from the earth of a demonic *kṣatra* (the armed forces in the world) and the subsequent establishing of proper, *brāhmaṇya* kingship: that is, kingship amenable to the desires and principles—*dharmas*, principally the idea of *varṇadharma*—defined by the carriers of the *brahman*, the holy Veda (i.e., *brāhmaṇa* men, "brahmins"). This purge was led by a specially engendered half-human, half-divine war party of kṣatriyas—the five Pāṇḍavas—who together represented Indra come to earth. This purge was aided by

[19] Alf Hiltebeitel has long objected to the "scholarly convention" that there is some "meaningful contrast between *Bhārata* (thought to have been limited to a main narrative) and *Mahābhārata* (derivative, massive, and comprising narrative and interpolations)" as he puts it most recently (Hiltebeitel 2001: 108). While my text above should make apparent that I do not think there is an obvious and simple connection between the names *Bhārata* (which, yes, sometimes is simply metonymic shorthand for *Mahābhārata)* and *Mahābhārata*, I do think that the purported historical observation of Vyāsa at 1.1.61 *caturviṃśatisāhasrīṃ cakre bhāratasaṃhitām / upākhyānair vinā tāvad bhārataṃ procyate budhaiḥ //* is evidence that at least some in ancient India distinguished larger and smaller versions of some form of this epic. It should also be clear that by "main *MBh*" I do not refer to a reduction of the epic only to its central narrative thread.

three veiled divine or semidivine agents—three "kṛṣṇas": Nārāyaṇa as Kṛṣṇa, the son of the Vṛṣṇi Vasudeva; Śrī as the Pāñcāla princess Kṛṣṇā Draupadī; and Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, who represents the *brahman*. This purge was occasioned by the rebirth upon the earth, as kṣatriyas, of thousands of *asuras* after their last defeat by the gods. The rebirth of those demons on earth occasioned the neglect of the Laws of Right Action (*dharma*) and the abuse of those within society who are equipped to show everyone else what is *dharma* and what is not—that is, brahmins. These elements of the *MBh's* framing correspond broadly to the old history of the brahmins' killing the wicked king Vena and creating Pṛthu from his corpse, and then commissioning Pṛthu as a "restrained" (*niyata*) and "brahminically attuned" (*brāhmaṇya*) king, a critically important text told to the new king Yudhiṣṭhira at the beginning of his reign (*MBh* 12.59). Their coincidence provides an important key for reading the epic's main narrative and understanding many of its supplemental narratives.

Bitter brahmin accusations against the abuses of the *kṣatra*—the constriction of *dharmas* (people's doing Lawful, Meritorious deeds and gaining the good results of those deeds) and the oppression of Earth, assault, theft, failure to acknowledge brahmin preeminence—are part of the constitution of the written Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* as we have it. These abuses are due to men of arms being *aniyata*—unrestrained, drunk with the arrogance of power—and the responses to those abuses varying from the seer Vasiṣṭha's repeated attempts at suicide to Rāma Jāmadagnya's repeated slaughters of all the world's kṣatriyas. A number of such stories centered upon the Vāsiṣṭhas—but also including the story of the Bhārgava Aurva—are related to the Pāṇḍavas by the Gandharva Citraratha at *MBh* 1.164–172. A number of others are told to the Pāṇḍavas as all of them but Arjuna tour the *tīrthas* during their twelve years in the forest. Of particular importance among these is a full account of Jamadagni's being abused by the sons of King Arjuna Kārtavīrya and his son Rāma's vengeance for it. Rāma Jāmadagnya's response to this abuse makes the *varṇa* issue central to the violence, and it is a very significant moment in the *MBh* when Rāma receives Yudhiṣṭhira and effectively blesses him, for it is the kṣatriya Yudhiṣṭhira whom the *MBh* charges with the slaughter of the *kṣatra* in the *MBh* story, a slaughter analogous to Rāma's earlier prolonged vendetta. The epic's accusations of kṣatriya abuse of brahmins provide one ground for the epic's *avatāra* frame-story with its purge of the *kṣatra* and its subsequent call for a proper kingship that will be restrained (*niyata*) and based upon Brahminic principles (*brāhmaṇya*).

The *MBh* has two outlying perimeters: one (which is itself actually doubled) at the very beginning of the entire work depicts a bard retelling to a ritual group of brahmins the original telling of the *MBh* (chapters 1.1 and 1.4) and a second, the original telling of the *MBh* by the brahmin Vaiśampāyana to the Bhārata dynast Janamejaya. Each of these perimeters invokes genocidal themes as it sets up the telling of the *MBh* account of the slaughter of the *kṣatra*. The first explains Janamejaya's attempted ritual genocide of snakes, which rite was the setting of Vaiśampāyana's telling, and the second explains the actual action of the *kṣatra* genocide of the Bhārata war as another instance of the ever-renewed battle of the gods and the demon *asuras*. These two framings of the telling of the Bhārata war with first a genocide and then a never-ending war between two different types of being are, each of them, bonded with an allusion to the brahmin Rāma Jāmadagnya's repeated genocidal slaughters of

kṣatriyas. Rāma Jāmadagnya is present in the minds of the epic's authors in a number of ways, but most centrally because of these famous slaughters, and the main accounts of Rāma Jāmadagnya's slaughters are integrated into Yudhiṣṭhira's formation at two important junctures of his story: first during his strength-and-knowledge-gathering tour of important locations around the entire subcontinent during the twelve years exile in the forest (3.115–117), and then at 12.48–50, just after his *abhiṣeka* as king of all the Bharatas, as he and Kṛṣṇa approached Bhīṣma at Kurukṣetra, near Rāma Jāmadagnya's five lakes. In fact, this second account of Rāma Jāmadagnya's deeds to Yudhiṣṭhira by Kṛṣṇa as Bhīṣma's instructions of the new king in *rājadharmas* is about to begin has an antecedent in Kṛṣṇa's briefly informing Yudhiṣṭhira about Rāma Jāmadagnya's slaughters back in the *Sabhāparvan*, as Yudhiṣṭhira embarked upon his quest to become universal king (2.13.2). This Rāma Jāmadagnya pair—both of which involve Kṛṣṇa teaching Yudhiṣṭhira—bracket Yudhiṣṭhira's quest for rule, and this pair constitutes a third use of the Rāma Jāmadagnya tale as a framing device of some version of the Bhārata narrative. Rāma Jāmadagnya plays other roles in the epic story that are derivatives of his basic story that are not of primary concern at the moment. What is significant, however, are a number of accounts in the *Dānadharmaparvan* that attempt to explain away the miasma that attached to Rāma Jāmadagnya as a result of his bloody deeds.[20]

When, how, and why were the Rāma Jāmadagnya framing elements added to the epic story or the stories of its tellings? The main ideology of the *RDhP* and the *MBh* generally is concerned to argue that kṣatriyas are obliged to wield force as kings and warriors, and further that the wielding of force must be restricted to kṣatriyas. Some kṣatriyas, such as Yudhiṣṭhira, may be tempted to pursue the higher way of harmlessness (*ahiṃsā*), but to do so would be a desertion of their *svadharma*, with disastrous consequences for their subjects and for themselves, by its constricting the opportunities of those subjects to do deeds of *dharma* and by the positive wrong (*adharma*) of the king's failure to perform his own Lawful, Meritorious Duty (*dharma*). As a corollary of this teaching, it is no longer right for brahmins to defend themselves or wield physical force themselves, though of course we have the precedents of the brahmins slaying Vena (Pṛthu's evil father) and Rāma Jāmadagnya's repeated purging the earth of kṣatriyas. Both major retellings of Rāma Jāmadagnya's deeds in the epic (at 3.115–117 and 12.48) are used to help make this *varṇa*-based argument. Given the historical fact that a brahmin military man, Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, killed the last Mauryan, Bṛhadratha, in 188 or 185 BCE and established a brahmin dynasty, one followed by the Kāṇva that lasted to 30 BCE, we are left to wonder about the possible interrelationships between an existing or developing *MBh* and these brahmin rulers: 1) Was the Rāma Jāmadagnya tale originally spliced into the *MBh* prior to Puṣyamitra's revolt as a hortatory or instigating tale? 2) Was the Rāma Jāmadagnya tale originally spliced into the *MBh* during Śuṅga or Kāṇva times as a critique of the brahmin rulers? If so, was this with the knowledge of the rulers or in some relatively remote *tīrtha* or *āśrama* hostile to the rulers? 3) Was the Rāma Jāmadagnya tale originally spliced into the *MBh* at the end of or soon after these early post-Mauryan brahmin rulers as part of a concerted epic argument to exclude brahmins from positions of rule? 4) What was the

20 For a fuller account and discussion of Rāma Jāmadagnya, see Fitzgerald 2002.

attitude of later brahmin rulers toward the *MBh*'s arguments against brahmin rule? Did they merely invoke *āpaddharma?*

The Ideological Core: *Varṇadharma* and *Saṃkara* in the *Mahābhārata*

One of the fundamental concerns of the entire *MBh* and of its chartering of proper kingship is the primacy of *varṇadharma*, the social hierarchy which grounds and preserves what is, ideally, a theocratic monopoly. Brahmins alone have the right to determine and teach *dharma;* their rites and recitations of the Vedas are the foundation of the prosperity of the properly ordered society and the proper king ensures their sustenance, funnels wealth to their rites, and grants them safety from the resentments of other elements of society. Also, it is often, though not consistently, said that the king shall hold them immune from corporal punishment. The opposite resolve to punish even brahmins corporally for offenses is expressed with the proverbial label Śaṅkhalikhita. This term is based upon the story of King Sudyumna's cutting off the brahmin Likhita's hands for theft—at Likhita's own insistence—and is used to describe a king of scrupulous justice.[21]

One of the greatest evils imagined in the epic is the breakdown of the *varṇadharmas*, that is *saṃkara*, the dissolution of clear boundaries between different kinds of people. And while the concern with *saṃkara* is sometimes clearly an issue of the biological confusion of different kinds of people, miscegenation,[22] there are numerous indications in the text that *saṃkara* is just as much, if not more, concerned with people doing the wrong kinds of work—people's being involved in *vikarman* (the wrong work for their *varṇa* type; the opposite of doing one's *svadharma*)—and the economic and political ramifications of this, particularly as it threatens the distinct function and authority of brahmins and their livelihood. If there is *saṃkara*, people without the proper training or qualifications to perform rites or teach the Veda do so anyway, and people with high levels of Vedic learning are forced to subsist by performing military roles, shopkeeping, or even engaging in agriculture—or they are reduced to "gleaning" and often starve. The king who allows such degradations to occur is said to be seriously deficient.

There can be only one reason that the *MBh* emphasizes *varṇadharma* and *svadharma* as strongly as it does—these principles were not as widely followed nor as widely recognized as the authors and editors of the text would wish, and the brahmins' monopoly over sacred authority and power was threatened. Wilhelm Rau concluded in

21 See *MBh* 12.24. Some passages that state or clearly imply a direct connection between the king's punitive duties and the survival of a socioeconomic order that maintains a place for properly educated brahmins and their contribution are 12.63.25–28, 65.5cd–13, all of 12.77–78, 12.91.6–9, and all of the striking 12.134. 12.130 (which acknowledges that certain practices of some brahmins may appear scandalous to those without sufficient "power of understanding, or discrimination" (*vijñānabala*) contains cautions against punishing brahmins based on mere gossip; see 12.130.9–15 in particular.

22 See 12.91.30–38 for an account of generalized evils ensuing from miscegenation.

his close study of the Brāhmaṇa texts that the four *varṇas* appear very differently in the Brāhmaṇas than they do in later literature; that earlier there was vertical mobility and not the tight association with birth typical later (Rau 1957: 63) (a point occasionally met with in the *MBh*). This point of Rau's was aptly emphasized by Sheldon Pollock as he made the general observation that in "the three or four hundred years following the middle vedic age (*circa* 800 BCE) . . . the most important social development seems to have been a far more markedly defined hierarchical ordering of society. The pyramidal social organization maintained by institutionalized inequality is now often met with."[23] Many parts of the *MBh*, particularly in the *Śāntiparvan*, promote *varṇa*[24] and *svadharma* vigorously, argue the hierarchical complementarity of brahmins and kṣatriyas concertedly (see 12.72–79), seem to be on the cusp of, and agents for, the development Rau and Pollock point to.

The Operation of This Particular *Mahābhārata* in Its Historical Context

If we step back and look at the whole of the *MBh* in the historical context which it most likely deliberately addressed—namely, post-Nandan, post-Mauryan, particularly post-Aśokan, north India sometime after 250 BCE,[25] we can gain, I believe, some general insight into the development of the *MBh's* arguments on *varṇadharma* and brahmins. Aśoka had preempted the brahmin monopoly on the teaching of *dharma* (he launched a "Dharma-campaign" in his various edicts, presuming to teach "Dharma" on his own authority); and not only did he do an endrun around the brahmin magisterium, he, like his Mauryan predecessors, patronized the *nāstika* ("heathen") elites of Jains, Buddhists, and others and became a lay Buddhist himself. And within this relatively cosmopolitan empire Aśoka forbade brahmins to offer animal sacrifices and criticized various of their festivals.[26] The Nandas, the Mauryas—Aśoka in particular—and their client kings were certainly kings fostering the kind of *saṃkara* the *MBh* finds abhorrent, the kind of *saṃkara* the *MBh* wishes to guarantee can never arise.

The newly chartered kingship of the *MBh* is designed expressly to apply violence (the king's *daṇḍa*) within society to prevent *saṃkara* from arising, to maintain *varṇadharma*. According to the *Bhārata* this is the main purpose of the king and his instruments of force—his *daṇḍa* and his sword; and there are detailed accounts in the *MBh* of the origin of the *daṇḍa* (see 12.121–122) and the *asi* (see 12.160) both. These tales make unambiguous the epic's understanding of the basic political reality that there can be no *varṇadharma*, no hierarchy, without the king's violence. Of course Aśoka and then Yudhiṣṭhira after him found this view somewhat troubling, but that is another very long and very involved story.[27] Of course all major civilizations have sanctioned violence and developed mechanisms legitimating the state's monopoly of violence; India seems relatively unusual in the ancient world for the fundamental challenge to violence presented by Aśoka and overcome in Yudhiṣṭhira.

23 Pollock 1986: 10–11.

24 See 12.60–66 for a particularly important set of texts on *varṇadharma*.

25 I deliberately indicate a date during Aśoka's rule—and thus earlier than the range when I think the redaction creating the "main *MBh*" occurred—to allow for a period of time when the ideas and feelings behind this redaction would have developed from their initial occurrences into the project of the *Mahābhārata*.

26 Details in Fitzgerald 2004a: 114–123.

27 The introduction to my translation of the *ŚP* explores at length the creative tension between the *MBh*'s simultaneous affirmation of violence and non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and the way this tension is embodied in Yudhiṣṭhira. See Fitzgerald 2004a: 123–141.

The Four Didactic Anthologies in the Post-Mauryan *Mahābhārata*

The general ideology that can be discerned in the *MBh* as a whole testifies to a sense of great need on the part of some brahmins. Without material capital, encouraged to forswear the use of arms both by the rise of ethical philosophies exalting nonviolence and the development of more centralized states with standing armies utilizing expensive iron and steel weapons, threatened by the success of new religious elites offering nonpriestly wisdom, brahmins found themselves, in Nandan and Mauryan times, in danger of being passed over by the march of new institutions. Added to these fundamental problems were the insults that Aśoka visited upon their dignity, including his presumption to teach his subjects what they needed to know to gain full blessedness in this life and beyond (*dharma*) without reference to the brahmins and their Vedas. The emperor Aśoka had relegated brahmins to the status of being merely one holy elite among several deserving imperial favor, largesse, restriction, admonition, and exhortation.

Thus it is hardly surprising that some brahmins would lead a vigorous counter-attack to articulate a new charter of rule based on the transcendent powers possessed by brahmins. While the brahmin tradition often presents itself as part of an "everlasting *dharma*" (*sanātana dharma*) based upon beginningless and transhuman textual sources—a timeless, noncontingent institution in some important respects—the post-Mauryan *MBh* exists because some very energetic and imaginative brahmins sought to take matters into their own hands and negotiate the terms of their status and position with the armed forces within society in the presence of the rest of society around them.[28] Their redaction of the *MBh* as whole (the framing and supplementary elements discussed above) culminated in the narrative portions of the *RDhP* (in "The Persuasion of Yudhiṣṭhira") and was then supplemented by the core of the instructional *RDhP* (12.67–90). Then Bhīṣma's instructional pacification of the new king was extended in the course of time as new facets of the basic issues of brahmin standing and support came to their attention.

28 What I am pointing to here is the fact that this "negotiation" is effected through the medium of general public entertainment, a popular epic tradition. Did the *MBh*—with the extensions of Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana*—remain a popular tradition? Or was the extension of Bhṣma's *anuśāsana* a phenomenon that occurred only in written forms of the text?

Brahmins in the *RDhP*: Senior Partners in Government

The instructions of the *RDhP* espouse the basic charter of *brāhmaṇya rājya*. One of its major themes is an emphasis on the king's maintenance of the brahmanic hierarchy (*varṇadharma*) and the interdependence of rulers and brahmins (of the *kṣatra* and the *brahman*). One of the corollaries of this symbiosis is the king's transfer to the brahmins of the realm the first portion of the wealth their presence and their rituals creates there.

Table 11.1 above provided an overview of the nineteen separate segments I distinguished in the *Rājadharmaparvan*, the eleven stand-alone subtexts (those marked with an asterisk) and the eleven segments made up of thematically unified groups of subtexts which I have distinguished and labeled 84f through 84p.[29] As Hartmut Scharfe has pointed out (Scharfe 1989: 215), the *Rājadharmaparvan* is relatively "more conceptual and less technical" than the *Arthaśāstra*, and as the map of the collection indicates, two of the major conceptual themes that dominate its discussions of kingship and kingly technique are 1) an ambivalence about the use of violence, often expressed by recommending the judicious alternation of harshness and mildness, warfare and negotiation, punishment and encouragement,[30] and 2) the symbiotic relationship between the *kṣatra* and the *brahman*, in which the latter provides knowledge, direction, and legitimacy and the former power, deeds, and protection.[31] In addition to these two broad themes, there run through many of Bhīṣma's lessons exhortations to the king to cultivate various new *dharma* virtues such as self-control, generosity, kindness, patience, and similar attitudes and habits. Violence is grounded in the need for protection from external enemies and from domestic criminals (and occasionally by the need to seize goods in order to survive)[32], and the protection of

[29] Much of what follows in this paragraph, including the notes, is taken from Fitzgerald 2004a: 130–131.

[30] The *Rājadharmaparvan* addresses the issue of kingly violence directly in several individual texts, such as, for example, in admonitions to be both mild and harsh right at the outset in 12.56 and elsewhere. But it does so most importantly in a series of texts surrounding the direct treatment of armies and warfare. The set of texts dealing directly with armies and warfare occur at 12.99–104. Immediately following the general statement on kingship contained in the Song of Utathya at 12.91–92, there is a run of texts that discuss directly various aspects of the king's use of violence or his making conquests by nonviolent means. There are four texts between 12.93 and 12.98 discussing limitations and qualifications of the king's use of physical force, and then, following 12.103 there are two texts on the theme of conquering one's enemy by indirect means (basically Aśoka's theme of *dharmavijaya)*.

[31] In addition to occurring in different forms in many particular passages, this theme is the subject of a set of eight texts forming a section of Bhīma's instruction from 12.72 to12.79, and it is a major theme in several other statements found here and there concerning kingship.

[32] The vigorous justification of conquest as a legitimate source of prosperity that Arjuna voices in 12.8 is not met anywhere else in the collection (see 12.98.4 for a mild reference to it), but the legitimacy of such conquest is taken for granted. Much advice is

brahmins and their status, position, and holdings is particularly stressed.[33]

Notice that of these twenty-four subtexts between 12.67 and 12.90, only eleven (12.80 through 12.90) actually deal with pragmatic issues of governing a kingdom. The other thirteen deal with the nature of the king and kingship, and the relationship between the king and brahmins. It is also the case that the religious role of brahmins in the general structure of society is a major theme of 12.60–66 (84f), a set of subtexts which seem to start the entire instruction anew, and the teachings of which are often obscure. If we look simply at 12.56 through 12.90—the first portion of the *RDhP* and probably part of its earliest stratum—brahmins are the direct or indirect subject of the lesson in fifteen of the thirty-five *adhyāyas*. And what is their importance? How does the *RDhP* see brahmins in its theory of kingship? The short answer is that the main lesson we have seen taught by the story of Pṛthu (the king should be *niyata* and *brāhmaṇya*) is put forth at greater length and with greater depth and nuance in these *adhyāyas*. The king should have a brahmin chaplain, have brahmins in his palace, and seek brahmins' blessings. His ensuring the prosperity and safety of his kingdom and his administration of punishments for various deeds of *adharma* is fundamentally complementary to brahmins' contributions to the kingdom's welfare (their ensuring the kingdom and its members against unseen hazards). The *brahman* and the *kṣatra* must always cooperate, must never be alienated one from the other. Pious brahmins are entitled to the first fruits of the earth; their wealth is the property of the gods and the pious king does well to transfer wealth to them from the impious (12.90.1–10; 130.4–5; 134.2–10). Brahmins, or their worshiping the gods with rites endowed with *mantras*, are the ultimate source of the kingdom's wealth (12.130.18b). The king is responsible for the general well-being and safety of the brahmins in his kingdom, and the property and wealth of brahmins can never be appropriated by the king, not even in the worst exigencies. As noted above, the king's use of violence to enforce brahmin monopolies and privileges is a sine qua non for the very existence of such a group, whose fundamental contribution to society is intangible. If brahmins are reduced to subsisting on nonbrahmin tasks, or if others are allowed to subsist by performing tasks that should be reserved to brahmins, the distinctiveness of the category "brahmin" disappears. To the authors of the *MBh*, such developments devolve great shame upon a ruler who allows either to occur. At the same time, the king is exhorted to distinguish between worthy brahmins and those not worthy (12.60.42; 62.4–9; 63.1–8; 77–78; 130.9–16; 159.24–30).

given to the *vijigiṣu* king ("the king seeking victory, or conquest," the "king on the 'warpath'").

[33] The protection of brahmins is of course the real crux of the idea of *varṇadharma*. The armed members of society exist by virtue of inequalities of power, and the rest of the population automatically sorts itself out into the various strata of producers and traders who are protected by the armed class as long as they are productive. The long-term survival of an unarmed class of people living upon the intellectual and spiritual contributions they make depends entirely upon persuading the armed (and moneyed) classes of their value. On the necessity of violence to preserve such hierarchy, see note 21 above.

Brahmins in the *ĀDhP*: Please Pardon Our Mess (and We'll Pardon Yours)

As logical as the basic charter argued by the *MBh* narrative and the *RDhP* is, it rests upon basic contradictions and problems. One of these problems is the necessity of the king's embracing violence, an embrace that was not to be taken for granted in the context of India after 400 BCE The main *MBh* faced and temporarily resolved the conflict between the violence of the king (represented by his *daṇḍa*) and the ethical value nonviolence, *ahiṃsā*, in the episode of the "Persuasion of Yudhiṣṭhira" which makes up the bulk of the narrative portion of the *RDhP* (12.1–55). I have argued previously that the fundamental inspiration for the character of Yudhiṣṭhira as we have him in the main *MBh* is the result of the fact that the authorial group behind the main epic was determined to purge and reform the *kṣatra* through warfare and simultaneously wished to see nonviolence as the highest ethical value. Aśoka had represented this ambivalence in his rule and Yudhiṣṭhira was designed, I believe, as a fictive counter-Aśoka who resisted the temptation to follow the path of *ahiṃsā*, and eventually, if reluctantly, came to own the terrible Bhārata war, to "stand by his war" (in my judgment this decision is the very source of his name: *yo rājā yudhi sthiraḥ saḥ*). This ambivalence toward violence was also expressed in the instructional portion of the *RDhP*, as already mentioned. But a more fundamental problem is represented by the necessary duplicity of *nīti*, royal "policy," which aims to ensure the survival and independence of the king and the prosperity of his kingdom. *Nīti* is rooted in *artha* rather than *dharma*, that is, it is fundamentally amoral, which is one of the reasons Yudhiṣṭhira objects at one point that he cannot see kingship as a deed of *dharma*.[34] Bhīṣma argues that the king's Lawful and Meritorious Duty (*dharma*) requires success in *artha*, and so the techniques of *nīti* are part of the king's doing his *dharma*. A particular deed may seem to be evil, but is not, because it serves a good that is higher than the good the action negates. The ambiguity of the king's behavior is complemented by even more problematic ambiguities in the actual behavior of brahmins themselves, which must be explained away or somehow excused. Finally, contact with various "barbarian" groups (*dasyus*) poses to both kings and brahmins the problem of whether or not to tolerate the ways of life and customs of those people. These three problem-areas challenge the fundamental rightness of the *RDh's* kingly paradigm. The ambiguities regarding the propriety of the brahmins is especially dangerous, for it threatens to undermine the standing of brahmins, the hierarchy they wish to assert, and the legitimacy of the entire charter. Thus there developed, in addition to the older concept of *prāyaścitta* (compensatory expiation for wrong done), the concept of *āpaddharma* which argued that one frequently must view the actual practice of kings and brahmins with sophisticated insight (one must have the "power of insight," *vijñānabala*) when one kind of exigency or another (the situation of *āpad*) precluded straightforward compliance with the main requirement of a prescription.

The concept of *āpaddharma* led, in stages, as described above, to the emergence

[34] See *MBh* 12.7.5–6, and 37; also 38.4. After he agrees to accept the kingship, during his instruction by Bhīṣma, he expresses similar thoughts at 12.51.17, 56.2, 72.1, and 98.1.

of the *Āpaddharmaparvan* as a kind of appendix to the *RDhP*. Table 11.4 above presents an itemized map of the *ĀDhP* that shows the scope of the collection's content. I have discussed the philosophy of *āpaddharma* as it can be gleaned from the *ĀDhP* (and the proto-*ĀDhP*) briefly in the introduction to my translation of the *ŚP*[35] and I will not repeat that discussion here. As the charter of *brāhmaṇya rājya* rests on the compromise premise that there is not a universally applicable ethic—the exaltation of *ahiṃsā* is reserved for brahmins; violence, tempered with kindness (*ānṛśaṃsya*), is appropriate for kṣatriyas—so too with other important prescriptions of *dharma* such as unfailing truthfulness (*satya*): they do not bind unconditionally. The instructions of the *ĀDhP* advocate a latitudinarian approach to the prescriptions of *dharma*, arguing that there are secondary forms of these prescriptions which only the unduly snobbish enemies of *dharma* deny.[36] The story of a Śaunaka brahmin's "shriving" the brahmicide king Janamejaya (12.146–148) self-consciously exemplifies both the *ĀDhP's* general advocacy of the notion that inadvertent or unavoidable evil actions need not lead to a permanent loss of standing among the *santaḥ* and the serious ambivalence many of the *santaḥ* would feel toward a brahmin who would enable a brahmicide's recovery of his standing. The final story of the *ĀDhP* collection[37] also exemplifies this liberal approach to *dharma* in its condemning a brahmin who fell into a reprehensible way of life during a time of *āpad*, but does so only because of his ingratitude. The story highly praises a crane who is identified as *Rājadharma*, "King Dharma." This king of the world's cranes regularly pays court to Brahmā in heaven and is a friend of Virūpākṣa, king of the Rākṣasas, who feeds brahmins on occasion. Both *Rājadharma* and Virūpākṣa treat the fallen brahmin with respect and generosity, which seems to be approved by the authorial voice of the story. The brahmin, however, murders *Rājadharma* and meets a bad end. Though the story explicitly condemns the brahmin for ingratitude and seems to encourage the same liberality the *ĀDhP* as a whole endorses, the story as we have it suggests indirectly that the brahmin was corrupted by his having adopted the way of life of barbarian hunters. The story further suggests that the brahmin, like King Janamejaya above, could have done *prāyaścitta* to recover his standing, but he failed to do so.

The *ĀDhP* is a most interesting collection of instructions. In addition to allowing the king latitude in maintaining his position and resources and in dealing with unassimilated peoples on his periphery, it approaches the discussion of *dharma* in the context of a critically important demonstration of brahmins' worthiness (*arhatā*) of

[35] Fitzgerald 2004a: 152–158. Please note that the translation of 12.128.24 quoted on p. 156 needs to be revised to this: "Permitted is any way of living close to his own Lawful Duty [= warfare and kingship, the *svadharma* of a *kṣatriya* king] that keeps him from depending upon others." Obviously the point which this quotation supports is no longer valid, and note 282 (with its implausibly contorted argument) needs to be discarded. My thanks to Georg von Simson for pointing out my misguided interpretation of 12.128.24.

[36] See my discussion of the *ĀDhP's* story of Viśvāmitra's eating dog-flesh at 12.139 and Bhīṣma's excoriation of *pandits* who would condemn Viśvāmitra in 12.140 in Fitzgerald 2004a: 157.

[37] *MBh* 12.162–167, "The Story of the Ungrateful Brahmin."

their position, protection, and privileges in society. And of course, as suggested above, their worthiness is fundamental to the charter of *brāhmaṇya rājya* the main *MBh* is promoting. This problem does not come fully into view until the charter itself is stated clearly, which explains its position as something of an afterthought to the *RDhP*. Besides the interesting way the second collection puts the discussion of *dharma* into a new and unaccustomed register, the collection also gives us a number of valuable glimpses into some of the actual social history of ancient India, throwing light particularly upon the fact that the status and position of brahmins was not as simple or as assured as recitations of the *varṇadharma* might lead us to believe.

Brahmins and the Two Final Collections: Singing for One's Supper

The very large third anthology, the *MDhP*, seems not to be a direct outgrowth of the inner logic of the royal charter itself as the *ĀDhP* is. And while *mokṣa* is the goal of renouncers, those who live in the fourth *āśrama*, there is nothing to indicate that the progression of topics across the *ŚP's* three anthologies is intended to lead Yudhiṣṭhira from kingship and *gārhasthya* to renunciation and *mokṣa*. On the other hand, as all three of the other didactic anthologies of Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana* are directly concerned with the cultural and political-economic dialectic between kings and brahmins, it seems likely that the *MDhP* would be as well. I suggest that the presence of the *MDhP* collection in this setting implicitly makes a new kind of argument for the support of brahmins, one that complements the older reasons for princes' supporting them while borrowing the basic stance of their *nāstika* rivals. I am suggesting that the *MDhP* collection[38] developed partly in response to the new circumstances of the post-*nāstika*, post-Mauryan, post-Aśokan world, in which brahmins could no longer make an argument of their importance *exclusively* upon the presumed value of their *mantras* and their rites. The *MDhP* demonstrates to kings and their subjects in the post-Mauryan world that in addition to all the esoteric rites and Veda-based wisdom brahmins had cultivated in the past, brahmins had as much of the newer nonesoteric wisdom to teach as did the *nāstika* favorites of Candragupta and Aśoka.

Brahmins had earned and maintained their place in society in Vedic times by representing and deploying an *esoteric* technology of spells and rituals for the welfare of their families, tribes, and polities. The Buddhists (and to some extent the Jains) gained their success by articulating visions of general and individual welfare based on universally applicable techniques (arguable on the basis of general *hetu-s*) of self-transformation. The *nāstikas* thematized "suffering" in general (*duḥkha*) as the problem of the human condition and taught their vision and their techniques widely and openly. The brahmins represented the presence among human beings of a sacred reality, the Vedas, over which they had a monopoly, and they maintained a monopoly of specific technologies—verbal pieces of the Vedas, *mantras*, and *vidyās*—that improved various aspects of the world, large and small, on a regular basis, or remedied various specific ills in the world. The Buddhists gained great success by preaching a specific

[38] I am certainly not saying that the collected texts themselves arose simply in response to these provocations or for the cultural political motive I suggest to be behind the *MDhP* collection, qua collection, of Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana* of the *MBh*.

way to end suffering, a way open to everyone, in principle; they were supported and honored in society for so doing. The *Mokṣadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* constitutes a series of sermons and teachings on the part of brahmins that address—to any and all—the same human situation and the suffering in it. (These texts do not all teach the direct path to *mokṣa;* much of what is encouraged in these texts are general habits and attitudes broadly associated with the aspiration for *mokṣa*). In the course of time the brahmin tradition developed universalistic philosophies and soteriological techniques that were taught nonesoterically to all (by their own *hetumat vacanas*) and the *MDhP* is a marvelous showcase of them. The *MDhP* represents brahmins' relinquishing their esotericism, and that is a fundamental part of what eventually makes the *MBh* the "Veda" for women and śūdras.[39] The *MDhP* contains a number of sermons offering general wisdom, and the very existence of the anthology in the *MBh* signifies, I believe, a recognition on the part of some in the tradition that if brahmins claimed they should be supported by the king, they had to offer something in return that would demonstrate that brahmins had general wisdom to offer on the big philosophical and cultural terrain staked out by the Buddhists. Of particular importance in the *MDhP* are those texts developing the doctrines of *karmayoga*, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and more diffuse, but nonetheless very important, doctrines of equanimity (*samatā, sāmya, sāmyatā*), self-control (*dama, jitendriyatva*), and *ahiṃsā*.

The kind of exchange I suggest the redactors of the *MDhP* had in mind—the proffering of universal wisdom by brahmins, which is rewarded with material support—is exemplified nicely in the *MBh*, in what is probably a relatively late episode that occurs at the beginning of the Pāṇḍavas' twelve-year sojourn in the forest. As the Pāṇḍavas left Hāstinapura and journeyed to the forest, they were followed by a group of brahmins "whose speech was leavened with the Vedas." This brahmin encampment hummed throughout the night "with voices sweet as the wild goose's" (van Buitenen 1975 at 3.1.43) in learned conversation that consoled and reassured Yudhiṣṭhira. In the morning Yudhiṣṭhira urged these brahmins who "lived upon alms" (*bhikṣābhuj*) to return to the city, but they resisted, insisting they would bring the Pāṇḍavas good fortune with their "good thoughts, prayer-recitations, and agreeable colloquies (*kathābhiś cānukūlābhiḥ*)." When Yudhiṣṭhira expressed shame at not being able to support them and then sat down in depression, a wise brahmin named Śaunaka, who "delighted in the higher-Self (*adhyātmarati*) and was well versed in Sāṃkhya and Yoga," addressed him. Śaunaka exhorted Yudhiṣṭhira with wisdom such as is commonly found in the *MDhP* "to steady his mind" (*ātmavyavasthānakarā gītāḥ*

[39] Only part of this notion is found in the epic, the *pañcama veda*, itself. At 12.314.45cd Vyāsa commands his pupils to teach all four of the social orders: *śrāvayec caturo varṇān kṛtvā brāhmaṇam agrataḥ*. Kumārila interprets this injunction to refer to the *MBh*, which Vyāsa had taught his pupils "fifth," after the four Vedas (*MBh* 12.327.18) (see Bühler and Kirste 1892: 10). The *Kādambari* refers to Queen Vilāsavatī's hearing a recitation of the *MBh*, the self-described "fifth Veda" (Bühler and Kirste 1892: 2), though the notion that it has the status of Veda for women comes from Ānandatīrtha's *Gītābhāṣya:* [Vyāsa's intention in composing the *MBh* was] "*vedānadhikāriṇāṃ strīśūdrādīnāṃ ca dharmajñānadvārā mokṣo bhavet*" (quoted from Holtzmann 1892–95, vol. 1: 178).

ślokāḥ, 3.2.19). The first words out of Śaunaka's mouth, *śokasthānasahasrāṇi bhayasthānaśatāni ca / divase divase mūḍham āviśanti na paṇḍitam* (3.2.15) form part of a consoling sermon given to King Senajit in the first subtext of the *MDhP* (12.168.31), excerpts of which Vyāsa quoted from Senajit to Yudhiṣṭhira at 12.26.20. After Śaunaka's sermon Yudhiṣṭhira, directed by his *purohita* Smoky (Dhaumya), worshiped Sūrya, and Sūrya then granted Yudhiṣṭhira an inexhaustible supply of food for twelve years. The relationship between Yudhiṣṭhira and the brahmins here exemplifies the generalized exchange of association and wisdom for material support that was characteristic of the Buddhist Saṅgha's connection to the king. We see in this episode a representation of an aspect of the king's support of brahmins that I think the creators of the *MDhP* intended to encourage.

Thus it is not the philosophy of *mokṣa* as such that defines the *MDhP* as a part of the *MBh*,[40] but rather the collection's existence as a new Brahmanic "textual space" in which some brahmins developed and taught a philosophy of *mokṣa* and similarly exalted "religious" themes publicly and (typically) nonesoterically, that is, more or less universally. It is this latter feature that most distinguishes the *MDhP* from the *Upaniṣads* and makes it an interesting new development in the intellectual history of Brahmanism.

Conclusion

The four didactic anthologies of Bhīṣma's *anuśāsana* exhibit an interesting structure that reflects an intense struggle on the part of the old brahmin political elite to define and control the polity to the best of their ability. They demonstrate that some members of that elite were aggressive in defining an ambitious agenda to fend off the disadvantages to them and their vision of the world in Mauryan and Aśokan cosmopolitanism; were nimbly adaptive in expanding both their fundamental sense of *dharma* as situationally flexible and their basic role as propagators of valuable forms of knowledge in exchange for the guarantees of authority, privilege, and physical security that they demanded.

[40] The idea of *mokṣa* is the governing idea *within* the collection however.

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12

Systematic Philosophy between the Empires

Some Determining Features

Johannes Bronkhorst

INTRODUCTION

It would be a mistake to take the Vedic Upaniṣads as point of departure for the development of systematic philosophy in India. These Upaniṣads contain no systematic philosophy, nor are they taken as basis for the elaboration of systematic philosophy during the period that interests us. No sources of systematized so-called Vedānta philosophy—which should perhaps be called "Vedāntism" or "Vedāntic" or even "Vedāntistic" philosophy—have come down to us from this period, and it is the one school of thought that is absent in the debates of that time. Probably the first more or less datable reference to systematic Vedānta philosophy occurs in the work of the Buddhist scholar Bhavya, who belongs to the sixth century CE. Systematic philosophy did exist before this date in India, and its practitioners were interested in each others' opinions, but systematized Vedānta philosophy was either nonexistent, or ignored by all (Qvarnström 1989: 15).

The other two so-called orthodox ontologies, viz., Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika, did exist during the period preceding the Gupta Empire, but the number of surviving texts is very small indeed. This small number stands in sharp contrast with the number of Buddhist philosophical texts that are still accessible to us. Two volumes of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, nos. VII and VIII, describe Buddhist texts composed before 350 CE (Potter 1996, 1999). No Sāṃkhya text from that period survives, and for Vaiśeṣika we only have the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, which is known to have undergone changes and interpolations.

These contrasting numbers should not induce us to draw hasty conclusions. An important number of Buddhist texts have survived because they had the good luck of being translated into Chinese at an early date. Few Brahmanical texts had this good fortune. It is also clear that Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika were in existence at least during the last centuries preceding the Gupta Empire, and that texts belonging to these schools existed but have not survived. It seems yet undeniable that during the early centuries of

the Common Era and before, systematic philosophy had far more Buddhist than Brahmanical practitioners.

For the early history of Buddhist systematic philosophy we have access to a large number of surviving texts. In the case of the Brahmanical schools we depend on what might be called textual archeology. In order to reestablish at least some degree of equilibrium between the two currents, it may be useful here to summarize some of its findings with regard to Brahmanical philosophy.

The systematic exploration of quotations of Sāṃkhya material in texts belonging to other traditions of thought allowed Erich Frauwallner (1958) to reconstitute passages presumably belonging to the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* of Vārṣagaṇya, a lost Sāṃkhya work that may have belonged to around 300 CE. The passages reconstituted by Frauwallner deal with epistemology. To recover these, Frauwallner based himself primarily on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of the Buddhist Dignāga along with Jinendrabuddhi's commentary, and on the *Dvādaśāranayacakra* of the Jaina Mallavādin along with Siṃhasūri's commentary *Nyāyāgamānusāriṇī*. Frauwallner argued that some of the material contained in these texts had been quoted from Vārṣagaṇya's composition, some of it from commentaries thereon. Frauwallner's exploration of Jinendrabuddhi's Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā for fragments from the Ṣaṣṭitantra has been continued by Ernst Steinkellner (1999).

Other quoted passages in the works of non-Sāṃkhya authors bring to light further features of the system of thought that appears to have been presented in Vārṣagaṇya's *Ṣaṣṭitantra*. Various early authors—most notable among them Bhartṛhari, Dharmapāla, and Mallavādin—attribute to Sāṃkhya a position which differs from the one which finds expression in the surviving Sāṃkhya works. According to them, Sāṃkhya looked upon substances as being collections of qualities. Nothing in the surviving Sāṃkhya literature supports this point of view, but the early testimonies are clear in this regard. What is more, there are indications that the qualities once figured among the twenty-five *tattvas* of Sāṃkhya, contrary to the list preserved in the surviving texts, which does not mention them. There are also indications that the five *tanmātras*, which in classical Sāṃkhya would seem to make up for the five qualities of preclassical Sāṃkhya, may have undergone a major change in the way they were conceptualized, from atomic to omnipresent. The nature of material nature (*pradhāna*), finally, turns out to be quite different in the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* from what it became in the classical system. If we are correct in attributing these various preclassical positions to Vārṣagaṇya's *Ṣaṣṭitantra*, it will be clear that systematic Sāṃkhya went through important changes during the last century or so of the period that interests us.[1]

The frequent occurrence in various early texts, prominent among them the *Mahābhārata*, of the term *Sāṃkhya* and of ideas that are similar to those of systematic Sāṃkhya, has not so far allowed a plausible reconstruction of the earliest history of systematic Sāṃkhya before the time of Vārṣagaṇya. One of the difficulties is that we do not know in what relation those passages stand to Sāṃkhya as a systematic philosophy. Are they early echoes of a system of philosophy that had been created and

[1] See Motegi 1986; Bronkhorst 1994a, forthcoming-c, and the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

that found its direct expression in texts that are now lost to us? Or do these passages provide glimpses of the nonsystematized predecessors of Sāṃkhya philosophy? The fact that Sāṃkhya-like ideas still appear in much more recent religious texts suggests that nonphilosophical Sāṃkhya largely led a life of its own, little influenced by the attempts of systematic thinkers to create a coherent whole out of these floating elements. It also suggests that nonphilosophical Sāṃkhya existed before, as well as beside, philosophical Sāṃkhya. Regarding the latter it is difficult to look back further than Vārṣagaṇya, even though it is clear that some form of philosophical Sāṃkhya existed already at the time of Āryadeva and therefore most probably before Vārṣagaṇya (see Bakker and Bisschop 1999; Brockington 1999).

The situation of Vaiśeṣika is similar to the one of Sāṃkhya in that we have a short exposition of the classical system in the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* of Praśasta, and various fragments from a more detailed earlier work which appears to have been for some time the main text of this school of thought. This lost earlier text is the Kaṭandī, whose author may have been a certain Rāvaṇa. The Kaṭandī was a commentary on the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, and was itself commented upon in a *Ṭīkā* by the same Praśasta who also composed the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha*. This commentary by Praśasta, too, is now lost, but fragments of this text, too, have been preserved. Information about the Kaṭandī and Praśasta's *Ṭīkā* can be derived from critical discussions in the works of Mallavādin and Siṃhasūri, as well as from the works of the Vedāntin Śaṅkara. The Kaṭandī appears to have been more recent than the Ṣaṣṭitantra: though older than Dignāga, its treatment of fallacious reasons indicates that it is more recent than Vasubandhu the author of the *Vādavidhi* and *Vādavidhāna*.

The Vaiśeṣika of the Kaṭandī was not in all respects identical with that of the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* and its commentaries. A particularly important difference is the acceptance of a creator god in the latter where the former had no place for one. A relatively minor, yet theoretically important, difference concerns the question how many atoms there are in a speck of dust: six in classical Vaiśeṣika, three in the Kaṭandī (Bronkhorst 1993a, forthcoming-b).

In order to find out more about Vaiśeṣika from the period before the Kaṭandī, our most important source of information is, of course, the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*. Unfortunately this text has reached us in a number of differing versions. What is worse, we know that this text had already undergone changes at an early age. The full extent of those changes can no longer be determined, but the evidence of some early authors—among them Bhartṛhari, Dignāga, Jinabhadra, and Praśasta himself—permits us to conclude that certain portions have been added to the original text. We know, for example, that the original *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* did not look upon sound as a quality, but rather as a substance, a form of wind (Bronkhorst 1993b, 1994b).

Since there are serious doubts about the form of the original *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, it is difficult to determine its date. Quite independent of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, however, there is evidence to show that Vaiśeṣika did exist during the early centuries of the Common Era. A Vaiśeṣika position is criticized in the Spitzer manuscript, which presumably dates from the third century at the latest (Franco 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001). The voluminous Sarvāstivādin *Mahāvibhāṣā* shows acquaintance with Vaiśeṣika (and with Sāṃkhya), as does perhaps Aśvaghoṣa, the author of the *Buddhacarita*. All this shows that Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya existed in some form from

at least the first centuries of the Common Era onward. There is, on the other hand, no evidence known to me that would allow us to conclude that these schools existed already before that period. The earlier Buddhist texts do not mention them, and not even Patañjali's voluminous *Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya* contains any trace of awareness of them; being a Brahminical text, it might have been expected to do so (Bronkhorst forthcoming-d).

As stated above, a number of Buddhist philosophical texts have been preserved, and we do not therefore depend on textual archeology to find out what Buddhist thinkers thought. There is, on the other hand, a fair amount of uncertainty regarding the exact dates of many of those texts. We know that systematic thinking started early, first of all it seems in Sarvāstivāda Buddhism. We have Chinese translations of systematizing texts that date from the first centuries CE. A manuscript dating from the first century has been found which, as Collett Cox informs me, contains a polemical Abhidharma text which criticizes the Sarvāstivādins.[2] All this shows that systematic philosophizing among the Sarvāstivādins began early, probably well before the beginning of the Common Era. Further reflections about the period at which it began will be found below.

Jainism came to contribute to the philosophical debate at a rather late stage. This religious movement—or rather one major branch of it: the Śvetāmbaras—has left us what it considers the original canon of Jainism. The authenticity of this canon is not accepted by other Jainas. Even the Śvetāmbaras agree that part of their canon got irrevocably lost, and that what survived did not reach its final form until the fifth century of the Common Era; there are clear indications that at least some of its texts are not very old. What is more, there is nothing that one might call systematic philosophy in the canon. The first attempt to systematize traditional doctrine finds its expression in the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, a text which may belong to the third or fourth century CE (Dundas 1992: 61f., 74; 2002: 70f., 86; Bronkhorst 1985).

THE EARLY HISTORY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY IN OUTLINE

In spite of the limited source material at our disposal, a number of indications suggest that the period from the beginning of Indian systematic philosophy up to the time of the Gupta Empire can be divided into two distinct eras. During these two eras those who were intellectually active had altogether different preoccupations, and were driven by different fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world. This is true to the extent that it may be useful to borrow a concept from the French thinker Michel Foucault. In his book *The Order of Things* he introduces the concept of episteme. An episteme, as Foucault uses the term, is the structure of thought that defines an era. In the recent history of Europe, for example, the Renaissance could be defined by its assumption of the resemblance between words and things. Following periods—the classical age or Enlightenment, then the modern age—are characterized differently: sciences in the classical age were dominated by systems of classification; the modern age is characterized by humanist philosophy and the invention of the human sciences. Foucault is of the opinion that two principles govern these epistemes. The first of these states that each era can have only one episteme. As he puts it: "In any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge." According to the second principle, each episteme is discontinuous with the next. As a result, in different eras "things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way" (Foucault 1973: 168, 217; Windschuttle 2000: 137f.).

2 Collett Cox has provided further information about this manuscript in a paper ("Reconsidering the Early Sarvāstivādin in the Light of a Gāndhārī Abhidharma Fragment") presented at the Thirteenth Conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies held in Bangkok, December 2002.

It is not necessary to side with Foucault in holding that eras are thus unambiguously defined each by its own episteme. Nor is one required to accept that "in any given culture and at any given moment there is always only one episteme that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge." Also Foucault's claim that different eras have to be radically different from each other may legitimately be questioned. In spite of whatever objections one may have to some or all of Foucault's claims, it may yet be useful to be open to the possibility that intellectual life in different periods may be characterized or to some extent even determined by different preoccupations and presuppositions. This may not be quite what Foucault meant when he introduced the notion of episteme, yet has the undeniable advantage of drawing attention to what connects different manifestations of thought that occur during one and the same period of time in a specific culture, and to what distinguishes them from preceding and succeeding periods. One might, of course, prefer to use some such term as Zeitgeist instead, but this term is too little precise for our present purposes. It will become clear that an adjusted notion of episteme, which remains more specific than Zeitgeist, will be helpful in making sense of the early centuries of Indian systematic philosophy.

For the period that interests us at present, two epistemes can be distinguished, two fundamental approaches to reality. These two epistemes succeed each other in time. This does not mean that at no point of time the two coexist. There is, as will become clear, considerable overlap. This overlap does not however remove the impression that the first of these epistemes really belongs to the earlier era, and continues into the second one, if not as a fossil, then at any rate as a survival from the past.

The first of the two epistemes to be considered is characterized by the belief that reality is thoroughly atomistic. Not only does the material world consist of identifiable ultimate constituents; also processes, which by their nature extend over stretches of time, can be analyzed into successions of momentary occurrences. Whatever happens in the world can be reduced to the interaction of those ultimate constituents. In the case of processes, this interaction is strictly unidirectional: earlier momentary occurrences determine the immediately following ones.

The second episteme, which succeeds the first one and in some cases supplants it altogether, has as principal characteristic the conviction of a close and inseparable connection between language and reality. A belief of this kind, though in a weaker form, had already accompanied some of the philosophical developments of the preceding era. In the new era this belief, now extended in a fundamental manner, did not only become the shared conviction of all thinkers; it became a shared concern,

which inspired philosophers to develop most of the fundamental doctrines that were to accompany and even define the different schools of thought for centuries to come.

Since time and space do not permit me to argue each of the following points in detail, I will limit myself to a short presentation based on research published elsewhere.

The First Episteme

Sarvāstivāda

The Sarvāstivādins may have been the first systematic philosophers in India. It seems likely that these Buddhists created, in a short time span, a coherent system of thought out of traditional material. This traditional material consisted primarily of lists of so-called *dharmas*. For present purposes it will not be necessary to provide a detailed description of these *dharmas*. The lists of *dharmas* were revised, new *dharmas* were introduced, and an altogether different categorization was imposed upon them (the so-called Pañcavastuka). All these changes did have consequences that had more than mere scholastic interest. Or rather: these changes were the scholastic expression of a changed and systematized way of understanding the world, of an ontology that had not so far been part of the Buddhist tradition.

The ontology which Sarvāstivāda imposed upon its Buddhist heritage is thoroughly atomistic in its nature. It denies the existence of composite things. Existence, it is maintained, only belongs to their ultimate parts. These ultimate parts are the *dharmas*.

These *dharmas* are not to be identified with material atoms. Most of the *dharmas* which the Sarvāstivādins inherited from the preceding Buddhist tradition concern mental states, and even those few that do concern the material world are not themselves material atoms. This does not mean that the existence of material atoms is rejected. Their existence is accepted, but they are conceived of as conglomerations of certain *dharmas*, among them the qualities form, odor, taste, and touch. Material atoms in Sarvāstivāda are not therefore the ultimate constituents of matter.

The same atomistic attitude which postulates that only the *dharmas* really exist is applied to things extended in time: all that exists is momentary, so that strictly speaking only momentary *dharmas* exist.

The world, seen in this way, consists of series of momentary *dharmas* that succeed each other. This succession is clearly not haphazard: the world is a relatively stable and to some extent predictable place. This is due to the fact that a causal mechanism is responsible for the orderly continuation of things. This causal mechanism, which receives due attention in the Sarvāstivāda texts, sees to it that each succeeding moment is determined by the immediately preceding one.

This model of the world, in which all things and processes are presented as "trains" of momentary entities, and in which the earlier entities are proximate causes that "push" the later ones forward, applies also, and especially so, to mental processes. Recall that most *dharmas* are mental by nature. Indeed, the canonical source inspiring much of the thought about causality—the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*, "origination in dependence," see below—primarily concerns the causal interrelationship between mental factors.

In explaining mental processes, the Sarvāstivādins were confronted with difficulties which had to be dealt with. They were of the opinion that two mental events cannot simultaneously occur in one person. This leads to difficulties in the case of some such mental event as the observation of one's own desire. This involves two mental events: the desire and the observation of which it is the object. The desire, being the cause of its own observation, has to precede the observation. Since mental events are momentary, and the desire is therefore no longer present when it is observed, this would imply that one observes a nonpresent event. Confronted with this dilemma, the Sarvāstivādins concluded that something nonpresent exists. Future and past things all exist: *sarvam asti*. This peculiar belief gave the Sarvāstivādins their name.

The vision which the Sarvāstivādin systematizers imposed upon the world is very different from the common sense perception of the world. These Buddhist thinkers were confronted with the task of explaining how it is that such a thoroughly atomistic world appears to us as if it consists of objects that are extended both in space and in time. They provided an answer by bringing in the words of language. Composite objects—such as chariots, houses, and indeed persons—do not really exist, but are believed to exist because there is a word for them. These things derive their pseudo-existence from the words of language. This implies of course that the world of our experience (which does not really exist) has a close and intrinsic connection with the words of language (Bronkhorst 2000a: 76–127, esp. 94ff.).

Other Buddhist Schools

The interpretation of reality first elaborated by the Sarvāstivādins spread to other Buddhist schools in continental India, not without being adapted and modified in the process. Soon all continental Indian Buddhists shared notions such as the momentariness of all that exists, and the fundamental nonexistence of composite objects. Even the schools that adhered to the so-called *pudgala-vāda* tried to define the *pudgala*—whose existence they supposedly accepted—in terms that owed much to the scholastic efforts of the Sarvāstivādins and related schools. That is to say, the fundamentally atomistic understanding of reality became common property of all those continental schools that have left us traces of their intellectual labor.

Vaiśeṣika

The same basic understanding of reality also spread further, beyond Buddhism. We have seen that very little documentary evidence regarding the earliest form of Vaiśeṣika has survived, but the texts that have survived allow us to conclude that Vaiśeṣika, probably from its beginning, is pervaded by the same atomistic vision of the world which we associate with Sarvāstivāda and other Buddhist schools of that period. In the case of Vaiśeṣika, this is all the more striking since it obviously made a point of rejecting Sarvāstivāda and of replacing their positions with different ones of their own. Vaiśeṣika did not accept that only ultimate constituents exist; this does not change the fact that it postulated the existence of ultimate constituents, atoms, which it then granted existence beside composite objects. Vaiśeṣika was not willing to deny the existence of things extending in time, either; yet its analysis of mental and related

processes (which includes their ideas about number) reveals a succession of momentary steps; indeed, it has been said to be expressive of an "atomistic mode of thinking." Even the acceptance of common sense reality, which distinguished Vaiśeṣika from Sarvāstivāda, led to a position which is very close to the one rejected. The common sense world of our experience is unreal and intimately connected with the words of language, according to Sarvāstivāda. This same common sense world is real according to Vaiśeṣika, but still intimately connected with the words of language.

In order to create a coherent vision out of the elements just mentioned, Vaiśeṣika had to introduce a number of notions which in themselves were very different from what we find in contemporary Buddhist philosophy. This easily obscures the fact that both worked on the basis of an atomistic understanding of the world (both spatially and temporally) in which only proximate causality was allowed to "push" the next moments forward (Lysenko 1994; Bronkhorst 1992).

Jainism

The *Sūyagaḍa* (Skt. *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*), one of the oldest texts of the Jaina canon, is acquainted with the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness. More interesting for our present purposes is that younger texts of the Jaina canon themselves adopt atomistic notions: the moment (*samaya*), the smallest unit of space (*pradeśa*), the atom (*paramāṇu*). All these are stated to be single, indivisible, indestructible in the *Ṭhāṇa* (Skt. *Sthānāṅga*). The *Viyāhapannati* (*Bhagavatī*) adds that "the atom and the objects that occupy one unit of space last one unit of time." Other canonical passages show that the Jainas side with the Vaiśeṣikas in accepting composite objects as separate and individual things (Jaini 1979: 98ff.; Bronkhorst 2000c).

Grammar

The new atomistic way of thinking exerted an influence not just outside Buddhism but outside religio-philosophical thought as well. There is reason to think that it exerted an influence on the discipline of grammar. This would then account for the conceptual gap which is known to exist between Pāṇini and his commentator Patañjali.

The commentator Patañjali imposes a form of linearity on grammatical derivations which is not taught in Pāṇini's grammer. S. D. Joshi and Paul Kiparsky have recently shown that many Pāṇinian derivations make use of (and have to make use of) "lookahead." Patañjali tries to arrive at the correct result without it. Only one example will be given here to illustrate the difference. In the derivation of *dadhati* "they put," the third person plural ending is not *anti*, as usual, but *ati*. In Pāṇinian terminology this means that the suffix *jhi* in the initial situation *dhā-jhi* is not replaced by *anti*, but by *ati*. However, the general rule (P. 7.1.3: *jho 'ntaḥ*) prescribes substitution by *anti*, while the special rule (P. 7.1.4: *ad abhyastāt*) prescribes *ati* only for the special case of reduplication. But at the initial stage there is no reduplication as yet; this does not come about until after some intermediate steps. Lookahead takes this future development into account, and does not replace *jhi* by *anti* until reduplication has taken place. Patañjali, and following him all later commentators, did not like lookahead, and tried to avoid it wherever possible. He goes through much trouble to formulate special principles and ad hoc rules that are meant to secure that each step in a derivation be determined by the elements in place, not by elements that have not yet appeared.

Derivations as envisaged by Patañjali cannot use preceding information, either. Only the elements in place at a particular stage determine the next operation.

This linear scheme characterizes processes in the first episteme: they consist of distinct stages, each of which is wholly determined by the immediately preceding one. It seems reasonable to assume that Patañjali thought of a grammatical derivation as some kind of process. Whether he thought of it as a mental process is less clear. For our present purposes this does not matter. Patañjali treated derivations as processes, and expected them to behave the way his episteme told him processes should behave.

It is of some importance to note that Kātyāyana, whose *Vārttikas* are incorporated into Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, does not yet adhere to Patañjali's vision of a grammatical derivation in which each stage is completely and exclusively determined by the elements in place (Bronkhorst forthcoming-e.).

Sāṃkhya

Sāṃkhya systematic thought looks at first sight like the odd man out in this enumeration of intellectual currents affected by the atomistic episteme. At first sight it seems indeed that the systematizers of this philosophy were not affected by it. Philosophical Sāṃkhya as known to us from its classical texts does not postulate the existence of atoms, nor does it divide processes into momentary units. Sāṃkhya causal thinking is poles apart from the idea of momentary proximate causes that push processes forward.

There is yet evidence concerning early systematic Sāṃkhya that suggests that the situation was not quite like that during the centuries preceding the Sāṃkhya *Kārikā*, the earliest surviving text. A variety of early testimonies indicate that the Sāṃkhya that found expression in Vārṣagaṇya's *Ṣaṣṭitantra* and before included the view that the five qualities sound, touch, color, taste, and odor were the ultimate constituents of all material objects. This point of view is of course similar to that of the Sarvāstivādins, who in addition thought that these qualities were essential ingredients of material atoms (Bronkhorst 1994a).

A number of indications furthermore suggest that early systematic Sāṃkhya did have the idea of atoms that were constituted of more elementary parts. These more elementary parts are often called *tanmātras*, and contain among themselves (or are simply identified with) the five qualities.[3]

As has been pointed out above, the Sāṃkhya that we find in the surviving texts is not in all details identical with the earlier form which interests us most at present, but information about which can only be obtained through more or less direct references and quotations in other works. We will see below that the second episteme may be responsible for the modifications subsequently introduced into school doctrine.

[3] See the Appendix, below, and Bronkhorst forthcoming-c.

Other Sciences

The scarcity of surviving textual material from the centuries around the beginning of the Common Era does not allow us to fathom the extent to which the atomistic vision of the world affected other sciences of that time. One might think that sciences such as medicine would be unlikely to be influenced by it. It is therefore all the more noteworthy that the *Caraka Saṃhitā* mentions atoms (*paramāṇu*; Śārīrasthāna 7.17),[4] and accepts momentariness in the following words, which it puts in the mouth of Ātreya Punarvasu (Sūtrasthāna 16.33): "Because it passes so rapidly, a thing perishes the moment is has come into being. There is no cause of its disappearance, nor does it undergo modification." It would be imprudent to conclude more from this last passage than that the idea of momentariness was widespread enough to find expression in this isolated passage of the *Caraka Saṃhitā* (Meulenbeld 1999: IA: 110f.; Bronkhorst 2002c). Isolated remarks in other texts, such as the *Manusmṛti*'s observation (1.27) that the world comes about with (*sārdham*) the impermanent atomic particles of the five elements (*aṇvyo mātrā vināśinyo daśārdhānām*), have to be treated with equal caution. Commentators (Medhātithi, Kullūka, etc.), be it noted, interpret these impermanent atomic particles as being the Sāṃkhya *tanmātras*.

Conclusions

This short presentation of the way in which the first episteme finds expression in Indian intellectual life during the centuries around the beginning of the common era allows us to draw some tentative conclusions about chronological and related issues. It seems hard to deny that this particular way of visualizing the world started within a school of Buddhism. Several traditional Buddhist elements easily lent themselves to a new interpretation that is in conformity with the newly propounded vision of the world. The problematic *anātman* doctrine of traditional Buddhism lent itself to an interpretation in which no composite person is believed to exist beside its components, the *dharmas*. Statements about the impermanence of things could be taken as a confirmation of the momentariness of all that is. The incomprehensible doctrine of "origination in dependence" (*pratītyasamutpāda*) could be interpreted as a causal theory in which earlier *dharmas* determine succeeding ones ("that being, this comes to be; from the arising of that, this arises; that being absent, this is not; from the cessation of that, this ceases"). These aspects of traditional Buddhism could be interpreted so as to fit the new ontology, and they were.

There are strong reasons to believe that this vision was first launched in the Sarvāstivāda school of Buddhism in particular. The complete revision of Abhidharma undertaken by the Sarvāstivādins has already left clear traces in their *Abhidharma Piṭaka*, which is in these respects totally different from the other surviving *Abhidharma Piṭaka*, that of the Theravādins. Early noncanonical texts of the same school provide us with further information. It seems probable that all the new ideas that we associate with the new episteme were introduced more or less simultaneously

[4] Tr. Wujastyk 2003: 398: "The parts of the body cannot, however, be counted because they are divided into tiny atoms (*paramāṇu*), and these are too numerous, too minute, and beyond perception."

with the new categorization known by the name Pañcavastuka. The fact that the Sarvāstivāda revision of Abhidharma has determined the content of at least a number of canonical Abhidharma texts suggests that it must have taken place at a rather early date. The Sarvāstivāda texts themselves do not however allow us to make a precise estimate.

It is here that the interpretation of Pāṇini's grammar by Patañjali may be of help. We have seen that this commentator imposes upon the grammar processes of the kind characteristic of the first episteme. This suggests that he had been infected by ideas that started with the Sarvāstivādins; he may therefore postdate the Pañcavastuka. This would agree with the fact that there are various other indications supporting the view that Patañjali was acquainted with Buddhist literature, and with Sarvāstivāda ideas in particular (Bronkhorst 1987, 1995, 2002d). This would then justify the conclusion that the conceptual revolution that took place in Sarvāstivāda must be dated before Patañjali the author of the *Mahābhāṣya*. Patañjali is supposed to have lived around or soon after 150 BCE, in the Northwest of the subcontinent.[5] The Sarvāstivādins are commonly accepted to have belonged to that region. Their intellectual revolution may therefore have taken place before 150 BCE.

The fact that already parts of the Śvetāmbara Jaina canon have yielded to the atomistic vision of the world does not permit us to draw chronological conclusions of much importance. The chronology of this mass of texts is notoriously uncertain; the only reliable information seems to be that the texts reached their present forms in the fifth century of the Common Era. This does not imply that all parts of the canon are equally young, but the fact that the *Sūyagaḍa* (= *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*), which is normally considered one of its oldest parts, already associates Buddhists with momentariness, suggests a relatively late date for the Jaina canonical texts that have adopted momentariness and general atomism themselves. (It may of course also be taken to argue for an early date for the Pañcavastuka.)

The Second Episteme

At four different places of the *Mahābhāṣya* we find the following passage:[6]

> Someone says to some weaver: "weave a cloth out of this thread." He (i.e., the weaver) thinks: if it is (already) a cloth, it is not (still) to be woven. But if it is (still) to be woven, it is not a cloth. (To say,) it is (still) to be woven and it is a cloth becomes contradictory. Certainly, what he means is a designation (viz., "cloth") yet to come (*bhāvinī saṃjñā*). That, I think, is to be woven, which, when woven, becomes the (thing called) cloth.

Patañjali draws from it a simple conclusion about the use of words: a word can be used

[5] Note that several scholars (among them Frauwallner 1960) propose a more recent date for the *Mahābhāṣya*.

[6] *VMBh* I p. 112 l. 10–13 (on P. 1.1.45 Vt. 3); I p. 275 l. 6–8 (on P. 1.3.12 Vt. 2); I p. 394 l. 13–16 (on P. 2.1.51 Vt. 4); II p. 113 l. 18–21 (on P. 3.2.102 Vt. 2): *tad yathā | kaścit kaṃcit tantuvāyam āha | asya sūtrasya śāṭakaṃ vayeti | sa paśyati yadi śāṭako na vātavyo 'tha vātavyo na śāṭakaḥ śāṭako vātavyaś ceti vipratiṣiddham | bhāvinī khalv asya saṃjñābhipretā sa manye vātavyo yasminn ute śāṭaka ity etad bhavatīti* | Tr. Joshi and Roodbergen 1971: 35–36.

to designate something that is not yet there. Most, if not all, thinkers belonging to the era characterized by the second episteme[7] draw very different conclusions from very similar statements: conclusions not about the use of words but about the nature of the world. The reason is that those later thinkers all shared a presupposition which clearly was not yet part of Patañjali's intellectual baggage.[8]

The shared presupposition which came to steer the subsequent development of Indian philosophy is the correspondence principle. Those who, explicitly or implicitly, accept the correspondence principle accept that there is a close relationship between statements and the situations described by those statements, or more precisely: between the words of the statement and the things that make up the situation described. A possible example is the statement "John reads a book," it describes a situation where there is John, a book, and the activity of reading. A similar analysis is possible in the case of numerous other statements.

Severe problems arise in the case of statements that describe the production of something, or its coming into being. The statement "the weaver weaves a cloth" can illustrate this. It describes a situation in which there is a weaver, the activity of weaving, but no cloth. Patañjali the grammarian (and his weaver) had already realized this, but had not been particularly puzzled by it because they did not yet accept, implicitly or explicitly, the correspondence principle. They had not yet fallen victim to the second episteme, which characterizes the next era.

It is difficult to understand how and why this major conceptual change had to take place, some time after Patañjali. For him and no doubt for most of his contemporaries, a simple statement like "the weaver weaves a cloth" was not disturbing in any manner, and might at best tell us something about the way how in actual practice words are used. This same simple statement, on the other hand, confronted all thinkers of the succeeding era with profound ontological questions of the kind: where is the cloth? All of them were convinced that the word "cloth" had to refer to something present in the situation described. Since common sense sees no cloth here, many were ready to discard common sense and replace it with a vision of reality in which there is something in the situation described corresponding to the word "cloth."

Nāgārjuna

The first episteme appears to have entered Indian intellectual history through Buddhist thinkers; the same may be true of the second one. It is possible, though not certain, that Nāgārjuna was among the first to draw attention to the internal contradictions marring commonsense statements of the kind "the weaver weaves a cloth" or "the cloth comes into being." Indeed, contradictions do not just mar such commonsense statements, they also mar many statements describing reality as conceived of by the Buddhist Abhidharma specialists, among them the Sarvāstivādins. The statement "the cloth comes into being" is problematic because there is no cloth in the situation described (if there were, it would not need to come into being); the same difficulty attaches to

[7] On this episteme in general, see Bronkhorst 1999b.

[8] This, of course, is an argument against assigning too recent a date to the *Mahābhāṣya*; see note 5 above.

statements describing that a *dharma* comes into being. Nāgārjuna concludes that in reality nothing exists. This position is known by the name *śūnyavāda*.

One verse from the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* will here be cited because it clearly illustrates Nāgārjuna's procedure:[9]

> If any unproduced entity is found anywhere it could be produced. Since that entity does not exist, what is produced?

What, indeed, is produced? Nāgārjuna's answer is: nothing, for nothing really exists.[10]

Sāṃkhya

Denying that anything exists is not the only possible way of dealing with the problem. Another solution would be to maintain that, contrary to appearances, the cloth *is* present in the situation described by "the weaver weaves a cloth." It could be held to be present in the thread from which the cloth is being woven. This is the position that is known by the name *satkāryavāda*, and which systematic Sāṃkhya chose in order to deal with the problem.

In an attempt to make this counter-intuitive position plausible, Sāṃkhya henceforth emphasizes the continuity of the material cause that remains present before, during, and after the production of a particular object: the thread precedes the cloth, clay precedes the pot, gold precedes the ornaments made of it. However, this emphasis on the continuously existing material cause is difficult to reconcile with the early notion that substances are mere collections of qualities. This may be the reason why this earlier notion was abandoned and is no longer present in the surviving texts of philosophical Sāṃkhya. In other words, under the influence of the second episteme Sāṃkhya abandoned the few links it had had with the first episteme.

Sarvāstivāda

The Sarvāstivāda Buddhists were better equipped than most to deal with the problems connected with the production of things. As a matter of fact, they already had a solution before the problem made its appearance. We have seen that this school of thought had introduced the notion that the past and future exist in order to solve the problem connected with the perception of one's own mental states. This same notion could now solve the new problem. Since the future cloth exists, each of the terms in the sentence "the weaver weaves a cloth" denotes an existing thing. (Strictly speaking all this must of course be translated into terms of the *dharma* theory, for *dharmas* are the only things that really exist.) The *sarvāstivāda*, though not created in order to solve the difficulties connected with the second episteme, provided a solution which in essence coincides with that provided by the *satkāryavāda*.

[9] *MadhK(deJ)* 7.17: *yadi kaścid anutpanno bhāvaḥ saṃvidyate kvacit | utpadyeta sa kiṃ tasmin bhāve utpadyate 'sati ||*.

[10] Bronkhorst 1997. Walser (2002) gives a long and detailed argument in support of a date around 200 CE for Nāgārjuna.

Ajātivāda

There is a third way to make sense of the statement "the weaver weaves a cloth." Nāgārjuna had concluded that no cloth exists. The *satkāryavādins* maintained that no cloth can be produced because it is already there. The third solution would be to hold that no production can take place. This is the *ajātivāda*. We find it most notably in Gauḍapāda's *Āgamaśāstra*, a text claimed by later Advaita Vedānta as its own, but also in the *Mokṣopāya*, which was to become the kernel of the later Yogavāsiṣṭha (Bronkhorst 2001b).

Vaiśeṣika

The two schools of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika become, toward the end of our period, the most important representatives of a position known as *asatkāryavāda*, which is the opposite of *satkāryavāda*. However, textual archeology reveals that, before reaching this point, Vaiśeṣika underwent a development during which its position was close to the *satkāryavāda*. Exploiting the possibility offered by the system to the extent that something may be existent without possessing existence, Vaiśeṣika could maintain that something could exist while being produced.

Jainism

Jaina canonical and postcanonical sources show that the attraction of a variant of *satkāryavāda* was great here, too. However, Jainism gave this solution a special twist of its own. Jinabhadra's position, for example, finds expression in the following words: "a pot is being produced having been produced in the form of clay etc., because it is made of that. That same [pot] is being produced not having been produced concerning its particular shape, because that was not there before." This way of speaking is, of course, typical of the so-called *anekāntavāda* that characterizes Jaina classical thought. What is more, the earliest canonical passages expressive of the *anekāntavāda* all occur in a context dealing with the difficulty of production. In other words, *anekāntavāda* appears to be the way in which Jainism responded and gave expression to the second "episteme" (Bronkhorst forthcoming-a).

Asatkāryavāda

All the thinkers considered so far were willing to draw drastic and often counter-intuitive conclusions from the perceived difficulties linked to statements describing the production of things. The Nyāya school of thought—soon to be followed by Vaiśeṣika—was not willing to do so. These thinkers rightly saw that the fundamental problem was related to the problem of referring. In "the weaver weaves a cloth," the word "cloth" presumably had to refer to something that is present in the situation described. As long as we assume that the word "cloth" has to refer to the individual cloth that is being produced, there are difficulties. However, do words only refer to individual things?

The ontology accepted by Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika allowed of another solution. In this ontology there are not only individual things but also universals. Beside countless individual cloths there is the universal that inheres in all of them. Individual cloths have a limited life span; the universal that inheres in all of them is eternal: it has no beginning and no end. That is to say, this universal is there at the time at which the cloth is produced. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika therefore accepted that words do not only refer to their corresponding individuals but to the related universals as well. This allowed them to solve the problem connected with the second "episteme" without straying too far from common sense.

Apohavāda

A word must here be said about a development that took place after the end of our period. It must be mentioned because it is, if not the logical consequence of what happened before, the solution found to a problem that had occupied Buddhist thinkers for a long time. Buddhist thinkers were in no position to follow the example of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. Their ontology had no place for such things as universals. However, the sixth-century thinker Dignāga—whom we know had been preoccupied with the problem of production—found an elegant solution, based on his analysis of the process of referring. He introduced the *apohavāda*, which implies that words do not directly denote, but exclude. The technical details of this solution cannot be dealt with here, but the consequence was clear: since referring is not based on a one to one relation between words and things, the correspondence principle cannot hold either. There does not have to be a cloth in the situation described by the statement "the weaver weaves a cloth," because referring does not work like that (Bronkhorst 1999c).

Bhartṛhari

Bhartṛhari follows Patañjali in matters grammatical. But where Patañjali saw no fundamental difficulties in statement like "the weaver weaves a cloth," Bhartṛhari did. He offers no fewer than four different solutions, some of which coincide with the ones already discussed. New is his suggestion that the objects referred to may have metaphorical, rather than real existence. Equally interesting is his proposal to attribute mental existence to those objects.

The Persistence of the First Episteme

It will be clear from the preceding sections that the first and the second episteme do not behave like "real" epistemes as thought of by Foucault. The second episteme does not fully replace the first one in all cases: a number of thinkers held on to features of the first episteme even while looking for solutions for the problems posed by the second one. Most Buddhist Abhidharma schools as well as Brahmanical Vaiśeṣika fall into this category. These schools remain thoroughly atomistic in character and stick to the earlier understanding of causality. This last feature confronted them with major difficulties.

Recall that in causality as conceived of in the first episteme each succeeding moment is determined by the immediately preceding one. This conception is not problematic in itself, but makes it difficult to visualize by what mechanism karmic retribution takes place. In order for karmic retribution to function, causal mechanisms must extend over long time spans: a present causal situation must determine right

down to the last detail a future event that may be one or many lifetimes away. How is that possible without the interference of numerous other causal "trains"? Is such a long-term causal mechanism really conceivable without outside supervision?

A school like Sāṃkhya was not much bothered by such questions. It seems likely that Sāṃkhya had never adopted the causal mechanism of the first episteme to begin with; its surviving texts shamelessly resort to teleological explanations. Buddhist Sarvāstivāda was not much concerned either: its specific doctrine, to the extent that the past exists in the future, allowed for the possibility of direct intervention at the right moment. But other Abhidharma schools and the Brahmanical school of Vaiśeṣika were deeply affected by this difficulty. Some of their thinkers took drastic steps to remove it.

According to tradition Vasubandhu, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa* and *-bhāṣya*, converted later in life to become a Yogācāra *vijñānavādin*. He was not the first Buddhist idealist, but his reasons for adopting this position are clearly set out in his *Viṃśatikā*, in the following words (commentary to verse 7): "The impression (*vāsanā*) of a deed enters into the series (*santāna*) of consciousness, nowhere else. Why don't you accept that the fruition [comes about] right there where the impression is, and is [therefore] a corresponding modification of consciousness? What is the reason that you imagine the fruition of an impression [to come about] there, where the impression is not?" Vasubandhu considers all these three—a deed, the impression it leaves, and its future result—mental events. The causal connection between a deed and its karmic retribution much later—being different mental events in the one long concatenation of mental events that make up a person and her reincarnations—looses in this way most of its mystery. Karmic retribution seen like this is no more difficult to explain than an agreeable or disagreeable dream.

Vaiśeṣika was, once again, not inclined to abandon the commonsense view of reality. It did not therefore opt for idealism, and made a determined effort to discover the mechanism of karmic retribution. This effort did not succeed, and by the time of Praśasta the school turned to the one remaining option: it introduced the notion of a creator god, whose primary task it was to supervise karmic retribution (Bronkhorst 2000b).

Summary and Implications

The preceding sections indicate how a number of what may appear at first sight unrelated positions that find expression in classical Indian philosophy—such as *satkāryavāda*, *asatkāryavāda*, *śūnyavāda*, *ajātivāda*, *anekāntavāda*, *apohavāda*, *vijñānavāda*, *īśvaravāda*, to mention but these—are to be understood against the background of the two epistemes specified above. This in its turn implies that the history of Indian philosophy, even in its early phases, is more than the story of a number of unrelated schools of thought. Quite on the contrary, it consists of a web of interrelated developments, in which thinkers participated who, even though from different backgrounds and without much sympathy for each other, shared several presuppositions and questions. It is also clear that many of these thinkers were aware of each others' ideas, even across the boundaries of school, religion and, we may assume, geography.

All this raises questions. How did these early thinkers communicate with each other? and above all: why did they bother? The answer to these kinds of questions will not come from a mere analysis of doctrines. The very existence of shared epistemes takes us to the sociopolitical background of early Indian philosophy.

SOCIOPOLITICAL FACTORS

Philosophical ideas do not grow on trees, nor do they find their origin in some Platonic heaven, isolated from the realities of life. This does not imply that the inner logic of philosophical developments can be ignored. It does however call for reflection on the circumstances which allow philosophies to develop in accordance with their "inner logic." What do we know about these circumstances in early India?

The testimonies of Buddhist pilgrims from China as well as a multitude of legends preserved in India itself inform us that philosophical debates frequently took place, often at royal courts. Exponents of different positions would confront each other and try to show the superiority of their own views over those of their opponents. Winning such a debate could bring great advantages, and losing one could have catastrophic consequences not only for the debater but for his group as a whole. The outcome of debates was often decided by the king and his advisers, but this should not make us conclude that the art of debating played no role. The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang tells us of a public discussion in which Dharmapāla, a Buddhist, had gained a great victory over non-Buddhists. Yet this discussion had been organized by a king who wished to destroy Buddhism in the country. This shows that other factors than political power could play a decisive role in these discussions (Watters 1904–05: 372–373).

There is every reason to believe that debates of this kind were already a feature of the period that concerns us at present. One clear indication is that debating manuals were being composed during this period. One early surviving manual of this kind has been preserved as part of the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, a treatise on medicine (*āyurveda*).[11] Part of the *Nyāya Sūtra* also counts as a debating manual. Nāgārjuna may have composed one (Kajiyama 1991). Debating, as is clear from the numerous more recent testimonies referred to above, was not a leisure occupation for scholars in ivory towers, but a matter of life and death, sometimes literally so. The obligation to defend one's positions against decidedly unfriendly critics obliged all actual and potential participants to thoroughly think and rethink their positions, and revise them where they had reason to fear that they might look less than totally coherent to an outsider. What is more, debates encouraged potential participants not only to rethink their own positions but also to get to know the details of the positions of their opponents in the hope of finding weaknesses in them. The inevitable result was that ideas traveled quickly and easily from one group to the next, and were also studied by those who were not inclined to accept them.[12]

11 Prets 2000. The *Caraka Saṃhitā* also "records" debates, as does Kauṭalya's *Arthaśāstra*; see Wezler 1993.

12 *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vimānasthāna 8.15; Vidyabhusana 1920; Solomon 1976, 1978; Bronkhorst 2002c.

These considerations anchor the development of Indian philosophy into the firm ground of the sociopolitical reality of its time. Ideas did not follow their logical developments for some abstract logical reasons, but because the philosophers concerned were under pressure to improve their own positions and find weaknesses in those of others. They were under such pressure because they might be called upon to defend their points of view. Seen in this way, the development of Indian philosophy during the period under consideration was in no small measure due to a particular custom that had installed itself at the royal courts and perhaps elsewhere: the custom to organize debates between scholars representing altogether different currents of thought.

Once such a custom has become part of tradition, it may continue even without political pressure. That is to say, scholars may go on critically refining their own positions and continue to show an interest in positions with which they disagree even when there is no king around who may oblige them to participate in a debate. Indeed, debating traditions may persist even in times when the stakes are less high. This does not change the fact that few people, and this includes scholars, will be keen to have their most sacredly held beliefs questioned in public if they are not obliged to submit to such an ordeal. In the Indian situation, it appears, they were obliged to do so.

The question therefore presents itself: Why did kings play this role? How did the custom of organizing debates establish itself in India? And which are the reasons that it maintained itself there for many centuries?

These are difficult questions which cannot be answered by merely studying the philosophical arguments presented in the texts. Quite on the contrary, an answer to these questions may help us understand why those arguments were presented to begin with. It is by no means self-evident that arguments are important, or indeed that they have to be considered at all. In India itself voices were heard against the "dry reasoning" which was going on in the philosophical schools. These voices became particularly strong when Buddhism declined as a force in society in the second half of the first millennium. It is certainly no coincidence that precisely at that time ritual Mīmāṃsā and the Vedānta philosophy became important, both of which claimed to base themselves on the Veda, which is essentially beyond discussion.

Let us return to our period. I have suggested in another publication that the confrontation in debate with representatives of totally different points of view may have begun in the parts of northwestern India ruled by Bactrian Greeks. This hypothesis accounts for an important number of known facts. It seems to me the most plausible explanation so far for the appearance of the debate tradition in India.[13] This does not change the fact that the presence in India of two strong religious traditions one beside the other—viz., Buddhism and Brahmanism—could not but facilitate the confrontation of opinions. The circumstance that during this so-called "dark period" of Indian history many rulers appear to have been of foreign origin, and perhaps for this reason less exclusively linked to any one religious tradition, may have played a role as well.

Another factor that may have been of some importance is that this new tradition

[13] Bronkhorst 1999a (improved French version 2001a; Italian tr. 2002a), 2000a: 124ff. For a study of the establishment of a Greek kingdom in Bactria, see now Holt 1999.

of critical debate could easily be assimilated to older practices that already existed in India. Names like those of King Janaka are famous in late-Vedic literature, as are the debates which he is supposed to have organized in those early days. The debates recorded in the Upaniṣads are, to be sure, totally different from the ones that characterize classical Indian philosophy, and can by no means be looked upon as earlier manifestations of the same thing (Bronkhorst 2002b). But it is at least conceivable that the very memory of kings like Janaka may have encouraged later kings with Brahmanical sympathies, too, to organize debates. The result would not be an Upaniṣadic debate, but the organizing king would not know. Buddhism, too, preserved the memory of debates, usually between the Buddha and someone else. Being representatives of a missionary religion, Buddhist preachers could hardly avoid engaging in debates, following in this the example of their founder.

I do not think that these historical antecedents alone fully explain why debates subsequently became institutionalized. It seems yet likely that without such institutionalized debates systematic philosophy might have never arisen in India.

APPENDIX
ON THE ATOMIC NATURE OF THE SĀṂKHYA *TANMĀTRAS*

Classical Sāṃkhya as we get to know it through its most important text, the *Yuktidīpikā*, does not look upon the *tanmātras* as being atomic (Bronkhorst 1999d: 686ff.). However, by rejecting this position it indicates that it is aware of it.

The idea of *tanmātras* as being atomic is found in a variety of texts, both early and late. Shūjun Motegi (1986) has drawn attention to the Chinese translation of this term which is more often used to translate *aṇu* (see further Imanishi 1961, 1968).

Very important evidence is provided by the *Yoga Bhāṣya*.[14] Here we read:[15] "The *tanmātra* is the cause of the element. The single part of the [latter] is an atom (*paramāṇu*) which is itself a collection of different component parts which do not exist separately, consisting of a *sāmānya* and a *viśeṣa*. All *tanmātras* are like this."[16] This seems to mean that the *tanmātra* is an atom, the single part of an element (*bhūta*). All, or some, elements may be composed of various *tanmātras*; the *Yoga Bhāṣya* is not however clear about this. It does not look upon the *tanmātra* as a single quality, but as a collection of a *sāmānya* and a *viśeṣa*. The *viśeṣas* are the normal five qualities, sound etc. The *sāmānyas* are the five elements, but conceived of as generic qualities; they are corporeality (*mūrti*; which is earth), viscosity (*sneha*; which is water), heat (*uṣṇatā*;

[14] See Dasgupta 1924: 66ff., where also some relevant passages from Vijñāna Bhikṣu's *Yogavārttika* are referred to.

[15] *YBh* 3.44: *tanmātraṃ bhūtakāraṇam* I *tasyaiko 'vayavaḥ paramāṇuḥ sāmānya-viśeṣātmā 'yutasiddhāvayavabhedānugataḥ samudāya ity evaṃ sarvatanmātrāṇ[i]* I.

[16] The translation "consisting of a *sāmānya* and a *viśeṣa*" for *sāmānyaviśeṣātmā*, rather than "consisting of *sāmānyas* and *viśeṣas*" or the like, seems confirmed by *YBh* 3.47: *sāmānyaviśeṣayor ayutasiddhāvayavabhedānugataḥ samūho dravyam indriyam* "the sense-organ is the substance which is an aggregate whose parts do not exist separately, of a *sāmānya* and a *viśeṣa*"; here the singular number of *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* is guaranteed by the dual ending of their compound.

which is fire), moving forward (*praṇāmitā*; which is wind), going everywhere (*sarvatogati*; which is ether).[17] In introducing these generic qualities the *Yoga Bhāṣya* deviates from other sources on Sāṃkhya.[18] The fact that the *Yoga Bhāṣya*, in spite of this difference, preserves the idea of the *tanmātra* as an atom is no doubt significant.

Another passage in the *Yoga Bhāṣya* can be interpreted along the same lines:[19] "The single modification as sound-*tanmātra* of the constituents of nature (*guṇa*), which here take the form of something to be grasped (*grāhya*), is sound as object. A single modification of sound etc. when they are of the same kind as corporeality (*mūrti*) is the earth-atom, which is constituted of *tanmātras*. A single modification of those [atoms] is such a thing as the earth, a cow, a tree, a mountain. Also in the case of the other elements, by taking up viscosity (*sneha*), heat (*auṣṇya*), moving forward (*praṇāmitva*) or giving space (*avakāśadāna*) as generic quality, a single modification is to be produced." The crucial word *tanmātrāvayavaḥ* must, in view of the context which speaks of ever more composite entities, be understood as a *bahuvrīhi* compound: "the parts of which are *tanmātras*."[20]

A passage from the *Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad* (3.2; perhaps one of the first in which the term *tanmātra* is used) easily lends itself to an interpretation in which it means atoms or something of the kind: "The explanation of (*bhūtātman*) is this: the word *bhūta* designates the five *tanmātras*. The word *bhūta* also designates the five principal elements. The aggregate of these is called body."[21]

A peculiar passage in Vyomaśiva's *Vyomavatī*—the earliest known commentary on the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* which is better known by the name *Praśastapādabhāṣya*—confirms the idea that the *tanmātras* were at one point the ultimate constituents of the molecules of matter. This passage discusses and explains the Vaiśeṣika position according to which a body is made up either of earth, or of water, or of fire, or of wind, but not of any combination of these elements. The

17 See Bronkhorst 1994a: 319. *YBh* 3.47 (*sāmānyaviśeṣātmā śabdādir grāhyaḥ* | *viṣayaḥ*) seems to suggest that the *tanmātras* have the same names as the qualities, also in the opinion of the author of the *Yoga Bhāṣya*.

18 The parallelism between the position of the *Yoga Bhāṣya* and that of the *Abhidharmakośa Bhāṣya*—here as elsewhere—is striking; see *Abhidh-k-bh(P)* p. 8 l. 21–22; p. 53 l. 9–10. Note also that the Yuktidīpikā under *SK* 38 enumerates (in *ślokas*) a great number of characteristics of the five elements, which includes the ones given in the *Yoga Bhāṣya*, though sometimes different expressions are used (*YD* p. 225 l. 24 ff.).

19 *YBh* 4.14: *grāhyātmakānāṃ [guṇānāṃ] śabdatanmātrabhāvenaikaḥ pariṇāmaḥ śabdo viṣaya iti* | *śabdādīnāṃ mūrtisamānajātīyānām ekaḥ pariṇāmaḥ pṛthivīparamāṇus tanmātrāvayavaḥ* | *teṣāṃ caikaḥ pariṇāmaḥ pṛthivī gaur vṛkṣaḥ parvata ity evamādi*| *bhūtāntareṣv api snehauṣṇyapraṇāmitvāvakāśadānāny upādāya sāmānyam ekavikārāmbhaḥ samādheyaḥ* |.

20 Hattori (1968: 154 n. 5.31) concludes from this passage that "[t]he Sāṃkhyas hold that the five kinds of *tanmātras* are composed of their respective atoms." This interpretation may have to be revised.

21 van Buitenen 1962: 102: *asyopavyākhyānam: pañca tanmātrāṇi bhūtaśabdenocyante* | *atha pañcamahābhūtāni bhūtaśabdenocyante* | *atha teṣāṃ yad samudayas tac charīram ity uktam* | ; tr. van Buitenen 1962: 129.

objection is raised that bodies might consist of various elements at the same time. In this connection the following passage occurs:[22]

> But if you accept the following: The constitution of a part, too, [can take place] with various elements. For example, a *dvyaṇuka* is constituted of an atom of earth and an atom of water, or again of an atom of water and an atom of fire, or of an atom of fire and an atom of wind. In the same way it [can be constituted] of wind and the *tanmātra* of sound. These *dvyaṇukas*, once arisen, constitute, passing through [the stages] *tryaṇuka* etc., a body.

This passage presents a position that is not accepted by Vyomaśiva, who points out that according to Vaiśeṣika doctrine the resulting *dvyaṇukas* and more complex entities cannot possess the qualities inhering in the constituent atoms. All this does not concern us at this moment. What does concern us is that the *śabdatanmātra* —the *tanmātra* of sound, or the *tanmātra* which is sound—is here presented as a constituent of a potential *dvyaṇuka*, and therefore as some kind of atom, besides the atoms of earth, water, fire, and wind. It takes the place of what should be the atom of ether; but obviously, ether being one and omnipresent, there can be no atom of ether in Vaiśeṣika.

This passage is enigmatic, because it is not quite clear who the opponent is. One may however guess that Vyomaśiva took this discussion, and therefore the position of the opponent, from an earlier work. Indeed, the same portion of the *Vyomavatī* ends with a long citation from a work which is identified as *asya sūtrasya bhāṣyam* "the *Bhāṣya* on this *sūtra*." The *sūtra* concerned (*bhūyastvād rasavattvāc codakaṃ rasajñāne prakṛtiḥ*) cannot be identified with certainty, but appears to have belonged to the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*.[23] The *Bhāṣya* on the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* was not, of course, the *Praśastapādabhāṣya*, but the *Kaṭandī*, probably composed after Vasubandhu but before Dignāga; this we have seen. It is therefore possible, or even likely, that the discussion about *dvyaṇukas* constituted of wind and *śabdatanmātra* occurred already in this earlier text, which may, in its turn, have been acquainted with an earlier work of Sāṃkhya, in which *tanmātra* was still known in the sense of "constituent of a molecule." It seems, however, clear that the position described by Vyomaśiva—and perhaps taken by him from the *Kaṭandī*—represents some hybrid between Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika: whereas the notion of *tanmātra* appears to be Sāṃkhya, that of *dvyaṇuka* and *tryaṇuka* is decidedly Vaiśeṣika.

22 *Vy*. I p. 81 l. 13–21: *athāvayavasyāpy anekabhūtair ārambhaḥ* | *tathāhi, pārthivāpyābhyāṃ paramāṇubhyāṃ dvyaṇukam, punar āpyataijasābhyām, tathā taijasavāyavīyābhyām ārabdham iti* | *evaṃ vāyuśabdatanmātrābhyām* | *etāni dvyaṇukāny utpannāni tryaṇukādiprakrameṇa śarīram ārabhanta ity abhyupagame* ||.

23 *Vy*. I p. 82 l. 20ff. Two slightly different *sūtras* with their *Bhāṣyas* are cited *Vy*. I p. 85 l. 17ff. (*bhūyastvād rūpavattvāc ca rūpajñāne prakṛtiḥ kāraṇaṃ tejaḥ*) and I p. 90 l. 4ff. (*bhūyastvāt sparśavattvāc ca sparśajñāne prakṛtir vāyuḥ*).

A very late testimony to the atomic nature of the *tanmātras* is a remark by Nāgeśa, in his subcommentary on the *Mahābhāṣya* on P. 1.4.29. Nāgeśa explains that, according to some, atoms such as the ones that are the *śabdatanmātras* are the word.[24]

If the material presented in this appendix is a bit higgledy-piggledy, it does show that the notion of *tanmātra* has been associated with atoms from an early date onward, and until recently. The circumstance in particular that the *tanmātra* is atomic in the classical texts on Yoga justifies us to surmise that is was like that in preclassical Sāṃkhya.

[24] Nāgeśa on Kaiyaṭa on P. 1.4.29 Vt. 2: *paramāṇūnāṃ śabdatanmātrādirūpāṇaṃ kaiścit . . . śabdatvam iṣyate.*

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13

A Well-Sanitized Shroud

Asceticism and Institutional Values in the Middle Period of Buddhist Monasticism

Gregory Schopen

There can be very little doubt that the most visible development in the archeology and epigraphy of Indian Buddhism in the period between the Mauryan and Gupta empires is the fact that Buddhist communities came to be fully monasticized, permanently housed, landed, propertied, and—to judge by almost any standard—very wealthy. There also can be very little doubt that these developments occurred unevenly both in time and geography, and did not everywhere follow the same pattern, or reach the same degree of elaboration. What we see now, for example, are widely scattered and not easily explainable pockets: the astonishing proliferation of monastic sites—after Aśoka—in Andhra around the Krishna and Godavari rivers with records of land grants and permanent endowments (*akṣayanīvī*);[1] the equally astonishing number of monastic complexes of various sizes in and around Taxila;[2] and a much thinner distribution in the "heartland," but still impressive. Needless to say, we do not understand well—if at all—why what we see had happened, or how, nor do we have as yet any precise idea of its consequences, though such consequences must have been far reaching, and must have impacted very heavily on a Buddhist monk's self-understanding, indeed, must have created unforeseen problems of group identity.

Note: A version of this paper which differs only slightly will also appear under the title "Cross-dressing with the Dead: Asceticism, Ambivalence, and Institutional Values in an Indian Monastic Code," in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, B. J. Cuevas and J. Stone, eds. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, in press). It is reprinted here with the permission of The University of Hawaii Press.

[1] See, for example, the map at the end of B. S. L. Hanumantha Rao, et al., *Buddhist Inscriptions of Andhradesa* (Secunderabad, 1998), fig. 1, which is captioned "Buddhist Sites in Andhra Pradesh" and where fifty-two such sites are marked. For the land grants and permanent endowments see, most recently, H. Falk, "The Pātagaṇḍigūḍem Copper-plate Grant of the Ikṣvāku King Ehavala Cāntamūla," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 6 (1999/2000): 275–283.

[2] See, for convenience, J. Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); A. H. Dani, *The Historic City of Taxila* (Paris/Tokyo, 1986); S. Kuwayama, *Across the Hindukush of the First Millennium. A Collection of Papers* (Kyoto, 2002), pp. 1–11 ("Buddhist Establishments in Taxila and Gandhara. A Chronological Review").

Being a Buddhist monk in these new settings must of necessity have meant something very different from being a Buddhist monk in "the old days," and "corporate" concerns must have begun to override individual life styles. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that Buddhist monks in these new settings would have had—in every sense of the term—an "identity" problem.

There is no evidence for Buddhist monasteries either before or during the Mauryan period. To judge by his inscriptions and the language used in them, Aśoka himself did not know anything about Buddhist monasteries. When, for example, he grants a tax reduction in conjunction with his personal visit to what he declared to be the place of the Buddha's birth he does not grant it to a monastery, or even to a monastic group, but to the village of Lumini itself.[3] We know, incidentally, from their own texts that, unlike *saṃnyāsins* or renouncers, Buddhist monks remained subject to a variety of taxes.[4] Even in the later inscriptions from Bharhut and Sanchi there are no references to *vihāras*, and they begin to appear—though still rarely—only in Kharoṣṭhī records of a little before and a little after the Common Era, about the same time that the first indications of permanent monastic residential quarters begin to appear in the archeological record for the northwest, and this is not likely to be mere coincidence.[5] Some of the western caves have, of course, been assigned to an earlier date, but such dating is very far from secure.

Needless to say, then, when precisely Buddhist groups begin to live in permanent quarters we do not know, although it seems virtually certain that this did not occur on any scale until well after Aśoka, and probably nearer to the beginning of the Common Era. Some systemic consequences of this development, however, might be more easy to surmise. Once Buddhist groups—we might now even call them "monks"—settled in permanent quarters they would almost certainly have been confronted with a series of interlocking problems. Permanent quarters to remain so required upkeep and maintenance; such maintenance required donations beyond mere subsistence; such donations required the further maintenance of relationships with donors. But permanent quarters and the maintenance of relationships with the same donors over prolonged periods also exposed monastic doctrine and practice to prolonged and close observation by those donors, and necessarily required that monastic doctrine and practice conform to, or at least not collide with, lay values. Considerations of this sort alone, it seems, can account for one of the most striking characteristics of all Buddhist *Vinayas* as we have them.

Already long ago I. B. Horner, in speaking only of the Pāli *Vinaya*, had said:

[3]See, most recently, H. Falk, *The Discovery of Lumbinī* (Lumbini International Research Institute Occasional Papers, 1) (Lumbini, 1998), pp. 18–20.

[4] G. Schopen, "Dead Monks and Bad Debts: Some Provisions of a Buddhist Monastic Inheritance Law," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 44 (2001): 139 n. 8.

[5] G. Schopen, "Doing Business for the Lord: Lending on Interest and Written Loan Contracts in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114 (1994): 527–554; esp. 547ff.; S. Kuwayama, *Across the Hindukush of the First Millennium*, pp. 3ff.; P. Callieri, *Saidu Sharif I (Swat, Pakistan) 1. The Buddhist Sacred Area, the Monastery* (Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente. Centro Scavi e Ricerche Archeologiche. Reports and Memoirs. Vol. 23, 1) (Rome, 1989) 113ff.; etc. A good history of the Buddhist monastery in India has yet to be written.

> For the believing laity, though naturally not to the forefront in the *Vinaya*, are in a remarkable way never absent, never far distant. They perpetually enter into the life of the Order as supporters, critics, donors, intensely interested; . . . What was important [for the compilers of the Pāli *Vinaya*, we might add], was that the monks should neither abuse their dependence on the former [i.e., lay-supporters], nor alienate the latter [i.e., the lay population as a whole], but should so regulate their lives as to give no cause for complaint.

And also:

> It must be remembered that it was considered highly important [again by the compilers of the Pāli *Vinaya*] to propitiate these [lay followers], to court their admiration, to keep their allegiance, to do nothing to annoy them. . . . Historically, the success of the Early Buddhist experiment in monasticism must be in great part attributed to the wisdom of constantly considering the susceptibilities and criticisms of the laity.[6]

These same remarks apply, it seems, with equal, if not even greater, force to all the *Vinayas* that have come down to us, particularly perhaps to the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya*, and this in and of itself may be important. If the compilers of the various *Vinayas* considered it "highly important" to regulate the lives of their monks so as to give no cause for complaint to the laity, and if considerations of this sort could only have assumed high importance after Buddhist groups had permanently settled down, then, since the latter almost certainly did not occur until well after Aśoka, it would be obvious that all the *Vinayas* that we have are late, precisely as both Wassilieff and Lévi have suggested a hundred years ago.[7] Indeed, it could be argued—and should be, but not here—that far from being early, the composition and compilation of the enormous *Vinaya* literature that has come down to us is in fact one of the major achievements of monastic Buddhism during the period "between the empires."

These are, of course, big issues, but regardless of how they might eventually be sorted out at least one other thing in regard to Horner's remarks needs to be addressed. She talks about the historical "success" of Buddhist preoccupation with lay values and sensibilities; she talks—if you will—about its survival value, but not about its costs, not about its impact on what it meant to be a Buddhist monk, or the way in which it must have put limits on individual monks' choices and foreclosed some old and previously available options. These too need to be brought into some kind of focus, and they might in the first instance be most easily seen in the ways in which these monastic codes deal with asceticism. Asceticism was—and probably still is even in modern India—dangerously individualistic, prone to excess, culturally powerful, and not easy to predict: precisely the sort of thing that could create problems for an institution. Buddhist attitudes toward it are still not well understood, in part, perhaps, because even the finished biographies of the Buddha are still struggling with it, and in

[6] I. B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline* (London, 1938), Part 1, xvi–xvii, xxix.

[7] For both, see G. Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks. Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), p. 27 and n. 26.

part because these attitudes have not yet been very closely studied and were probably always ambivalent. Still, watching how even one of our monastic codes—one which was certainly compiled in the period between empires—dealt with a particularly troubling element of asceticism in India will perhaps tell us a great deal about how the Buddhist monastic institution tried to contain the individual monk, even if that attempt might eventually prove a failure. It might also tell us more fully what that institution valued.

The *Lalitavistara* is not a *Vinaya* text, but it probably comes from the same period as the *Vinayas* that we have,[8] and it contains a curious episode which concerns a particularly offensive and culturally dangerous element of ascetic practice, one that tangles together issues of group identity and public image, issues of lay values, pollution, death, and how a monk should dress. It is strikingly ambivalent and nicely sets the stage for what we will see in our monastic code.

The Buddha tells his monks that when, just prior to his awakening, he had determined to end his six years of extreme ascetic practices, the yellow garments (*kāṣāyani vastrāṇi*) he had worn for those six years were completely worn out (*parijīrṇa*)—*kāṣāya* can of course mean "impure," and here the ambiguity starts. As a consequence, he says, it occurred to him: "It would be good if I could obtain a loin-cloth (*kaupīnapracchādana*)." And the text continues with the Buddha speaking:[9]

> At that time a slave girl of the village girl Sujātā had died who was named Rādhā. She, having been wrapped in hemp cloths and carried to the burning ground (*śmaśāna*) had been abandoned (*parityakta*) there. I myself saw that refuse rag (*pāṃśukūla*). Then I, stepping on that refuse rag with my left foot, and reaching out with my right hand, had bent down to pick it up. Then the earthly gods proclaimed to the gods in the sky—"Amazing sirs! This, sirs, is astonishing, when indeed the off-spring of a great royal family, one who has abandoned the rule of a wheel turning king, has turned his attention towards a refuse rag!

The news is then shouted from one group of gods to another. They are clearly stunned, and so too might we be, if perhaps for other reasons: the message here seems to be strikingly odd. The Bodhisattva here is starting to change clothes and, as for example in the Buddha's initial "going forth," in Buddhist narrative literature a change

[8]The discussion of the date and "composition" of the Sanskrit text of the *Lalitavistara* that we have has not progressed much beyond where it was fifty years ago. It is now generally accepted that the *Lalitavistara* that we have is—as Winternitz said long ago—"a recast of an older Hīnayāna text, the Buddha biography of the Sarvāstivāda school, enlarged and embellished in the spirit of the Mahāyāna"; M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, trans. S. Ketkar and H. Kohn (Calcutta, 1927), vol. 2, p. 252; also E. J. Thomas, "The Lalitavistara and Sarvāstivāda," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 16 (1940), pp. 239–245; Ét. Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien: Des origines à l'ère śaka* (Louvain, 1958), pp. 636, 691, etc.). But—again as Winternitz said—"When the *Lalitavistara* was finally edited, we do not know."

[9] S. Lefmann, *Lalita Vistara* (Halle, 1902), T. 1, 265.19ff.

of clothes invariably marks a change in character and course. But here, when the Bodhisattva should be ending his period of radical asceticism, the change would seem to be going socially from bad to worse. He is changing from tattered rags, which are offensive enough, to dressing in a shroud, which—given Indian fastidiousness about death pollution—would seem to have been entirely off-putting. More particularly, he would be putting his genitals in close and direct contact with cloth that had not only been in direct contact with a dead body, but with a woman's dead body and all its effluents. His asceticism would seem, in short, not to be decreasing but increasing in its social offensiveness. This is very odd, and there are signs that the author of the *Lalitavistara* knew it. Notice, for example, that he avoids words for "corpse" or "shroud," and seems to refer almost immediately not only to the cloth, but also to the body, as a "refuse rag," although technically—as we will see—according to *Vinaya* law even the cloth cannot be so designated. Our author may also be showing his uneasiness in the way he continues the story.

Immediately following the divine shouting, the author puts into the mouth of the Buddha an elaborate account of how he immediately washed the cloth in a pond especially created by the gods for that purpose, and this is good, but—again as we will see—not a sufficient alteration of a shroud according to *Vinaya* rule. The most telling indication of the author's unease, however, may be the fact that he has the Buddha, with some more divine intervention, in effect conceal what he will be wearing. After washing the shroud, the Buddha, according to the text, made it into a *saṃghāṭī*. Edgerton gives "waist-cloth" for *saṃghāṭī*, but it is likely to have been similar to a *kaupīnapracchādana*, or simply *kaupīna*, and our text itself would seem to go some ways toward showing that—it was after all a *kaupīna* that the Bodhisattva was after when he initially picked up the shroud.[10] In any case, it was certainly an inner or under garment, and monks are elsewhere criticized for wandering around the countryside dressed only in their *saṃghāṭī*. This, however, is apparently all the Bodhisattva has—a *kaupīna* made out of shroud—as he is about to reenter the social world. That is until the author—not the Buddha—has recourse to a deus ex machina with the very probable name Vimalaprabha:

> Then a son of a god who lived in the pure abodes named Vimalaprabha placed before the Bodhisattva divine robes, dyed with ocher dye, proper, appropriate to a *śramaṇa* (*divyāni cīvarāṇi kāṣāyaraṅgaraktāni kalpikāni śramaṇasārūpyāṇi bodhisattvāyopanāmayati sma*). And the Bodhisattva, having taken them, having dressed in the morning, having covered the loin-cloth, turned toward the village within his range (*bodhisattvaś ca tāni gṛhītvā pūrvāhne nivāsya saṃghāṭī prāvṛtya gocaragrāmābhimukho 'bhūt*).

[10] F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (New Haven, 1953), p. 549. Edgerton's "waist-cloth" is, of course, reflective of the normal technical sense of *saṃghāṭī* (translated now more commonly as "outer robe"), but its usage here may have to be seen in light of the fact that the events being described are, in Buddhist "narrative time," prior to the promulgation of the formal rules concerning robes and, therefore, any technical sense for the term *saṃghāṭī*.

Although the difference in the end is probably negligible, it should be first noted that the final sentence here allows for two readings. A strong reading, which is represented in the translation, takes *prāvṛtya* as the gerund of *prā√vṛ*, "to cover" or even stronger, "to conceal." But *prā√vṛt*, which might mean "wrap around," would produce exactly the same form, and the two verbs are, it seems, already confused in the Veda. However—and this is the crucial point—even if the author intended "wrapped around," the fact remains that the robes that were "proper" and "appropriate to a *śramaṇa*" conveniently supplied by Vimalaprabha would have covered or concealed the *saṃghāṭī* or shroud which—someone may have thought—was not.[11] That monastic robes could conceal as much as they reveal, and that Buddhist authors were as aware as we are that clothes are intimately linked with questions of identity are, moreover, clear from other texts. The most straightforward of such texts is perhaps one that occurs in the *Kṣudrakavastu* section of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*:[12]

> The Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying in Śrāvastī, in the Jetavana, in the Park of Anāthapiṇḍada.
>
> Since the cold season had descended, the monks, being afflicted by the cold, stayed in bed. But when the householder Anāthapiṇḍada came to the monastery and saw them he said: "Noble Ones, why do you lie around when the teaching is all about effort, and not work towards the good?"
>
> "Although those who are comfortable might call to mind the *dharma*," they said, "we are freezing!"
>
> Anāthapiṇḍada returned to his house and sent them five hundred woolen garments. The monks put on the householders' clothes, but when they went outside, and brahmins and householders saw them, they scoffed at them and said: "So, Noble Ones, you have fallen?!"
>
> The monks said: "You, sirs, must not speak that way—we have only done this because we were cold," and they abused them in return.
>
> The monks reported this matter to the Blessed One, and the Blessed One said, "Monks must not wear householders' clothes! Should similar circumstances arise, they must be worn when monastic robes have been put on over them."

[11] The Tibetan translation of the *Lalitavistara* is of little help in all of this. It may have been based on a different reading, or may have simply avoided the ambiguities. It reads: *byang chub sems dpas kyang de dag blangs te / snga dro sham thabs dang chos gos bgos nas spyod yul kyi grang du phyogs pa*, Derge mdo, Kha 131b.5; cf. N. Poppe, *The Twelve Deeds of Buddha: A Mongolian Version of the Lalitavistara* (Seattle, 1967), pp. 142–143). P. E. de Foucaux, *Le Lalitavistara. L'histoire traditionnelle de la vie du bouddha çakyamuni* (Paris, 1884–1892, repr. 1988), p. 230, in his old translation from the Sanskrit, also seems to gloss over the ambiguities: "Le Bodhisattva, les ayant pris et s'étant, le matin, revêtu de ses habits de religieux, se dirigea . . . ." Lefmann, however, gives no significant variants for the passage. Note that all references to Tibetan texts are to the Derge printing reprinted in *The Tibetan Tripitaka. Taipei Edition*, ed. A. W. Barber (Taipei, 1991). Canonical *Vinaya* are cited according to the letter of the volume in the *'dul ba* section, original folio number, and line. For texts in other sections the same format is followed, but the section name is given first. Texts from the *bstan 'gyur* are marked as such.

[12] *Kṣudrakavastu*, Derge Tha 67b.4–68a.1

The implications of this little sketch probably do not require an elaborate exegesis, nor, perhaps, does the rule it delivers. What the text establishes at a minimum is that at least one literate monk who was in a position to redact the rules in the Middle Period thought, or wanted others to think, that in the "outside" you were what you wore. That, in effect, clothes made the monk, and that anything that might threaten a Buddhist monk's identity as a monk must—quite literally—be covered up or concealed. This, in fact, is made a rule.

Read in light of *Vinaya* texts like this one, it is difficult not to see a similar message in the passage from the *Lalitavistara*. Here too the individual (in this case the Buddha himself) is about to enter the "outside" social world. Here too he is wearing—prior to the divine intervention—clothes that would mark him as a specific type. Here too these clothes must be—narratively—covered up with clothes that are, apparently, "appropriate" to another type. In the case of the *Vinaya* text it is clear enough what types are being forcibly distinguished by the concealment: the monk from the layman. In the case of the *Lalitavistara* things appear to be considerably more complex. Here, at the very least, one type of "renouncer" is being distinguished from another; "appropriate" attire for a renouncer is being distinguished from what, by implication, is not appropriate; at least a neutral, if not positive, image is being distinguished from a threatening, highly polluting one; the dress of the living is being distinguished from the clothes of the dead. And the *Lalitavistara* is, of course, not simply distinguishing. The narrative is describing in effect the concealment of what is inappropriate by that which is "proper"; the concealment of what is threatening and polluting by that which is not; the concealment of a body wrapped (*prāvṛtya* in the second sense) in a shroud for the dead by covering it with a costume of the living. If you are what you wear this is a decidedly mixed message—perhaps even an intentionally scrambled one.

The monks in the *Vinaya* text have a good reason for wearing laymens' clothes under their religious robes—they are freezing. Curiously, there is no equally good or at least obvious reason why in the *Lalitavistara* the Bodhisattva—once supplied with "appropriate" robes—should retain the shroud undergarment, but its author seems to go out of his way to explicitly say that he did. Indeed, there is no obvious reason why the incident involving the shroud should have been included here at all—leave it out and with the account of Vimalaprabha alone you still have a stirring scenario. But the fact that the incident is nowhere else certainly found in Buddhist "canonical" narrative would seem to suggest that it had been intentionally added by the Mahāyāna author or redactor who reshaped another or earlier tradition into the Mahāyāna *Lalitavistara* that we have, and this apparently intentional addition may require that the narrative be read in still another way: the shroud may not be covered up or be concealed, it may undergird. The message here may be not that radical ascetic, socially dangerous

practices must be covered up, but rather that even beneath the appearance of the conventionally "proper" monk there is a body wrapped in a shroud, and that in fact the latter is the foundation of the former, that, in spite of appearances, radical ascetic and socially dangerous practices still underlie Buddhist monasticism.

But whichever reading be preferred, the mere existence of this curious incident must indicate that the place of radical asceticism, and the practice of dressing like the dead, remained an issue—and a difficult one—for the redactor of our *Lalitavistara*.[13] Moreover, the fact that his rehandling has Mahāyānized his text, and the increasing scholarly awareness of an early Mahāyāna tilt toward, or back toward, radical asceticism, might combine to support the second reading, and provide some support for seeing in the shroud incident a soft and carefully phrased assertion of the underlying importance of ascetic practice. All of this, however, remains only possible. What is certain is that Buddhist monks dressing like the dead was also an issue for the redactors of at least one important Sanskrit *Vinaya*.

The *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* contains numerous indications that its redactors were keenly aware of the connections between what a monk wore and how he was perceived, the connections between clothes and identity. They also understood, it seems, that clothing, what you wore, and appearances had consequences. One such indication has already been cited: in the *Kṣudrakavastu* when monks wear laymens' clothes "outside" they are immediately perceived there as no longer being monks. But this same awareness also lies at the root of the "origin tale" in this *Vinaya*, which delivers the authorization and rule requiring Buddhist monks to wear robes of a distinctive pattern so that they are clearly distinguishable from other religious men of the same type. The tale occurs, appropriately enough, in the *Cīvaravastu* and starts this way:[14]

> It was the usual practice (*ācarita*) of King Bimbisāra when he saw a monk or nun to dismount from his elephant and to venerate their feet. On one occasion he had mounted his elephant and set out to venerate the feet of the Blessed One. Along the way he saw an Ājīvaka in the middle of the road. Bimbisāra, being thoroughly confused (*jātasaṃbhrama*) in regard to him, dismounted from his elephant and fell at his feet. The non-believers (*aśrāddha*) there thought to themselves: "So, the king is not devoted (*abhiprasanna*) only to Buddhist monks. He is also devoted to Ājīvakas!"
>
> But the believers there thought: "Surely the king, thinking 'this is a monk,' was thoroughly confused when he dismounted from his elephant and fell at his feet." They, in their consternation (*sandigdhamanas*), said to the king: "To whom did the lord show veneration?"

[13] For the place of radical asceticism in "the Mahāyāna" see, as just one example, G. Schopen, "The Mahāyāna and the Middle Period in Indian Buddhism: Through a Chinese Looking Glass," *Eastern Buddhist*, n.s. 32.2 (2000): 1–25; esp. 21–23, and the textual sources cited in the notes there. See also the passage from the Mahāyāna *Ratnamegha-sūtra* cited below.

[14] *Cīvaravastu*, N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts* (Srinagar, 1942) vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 49.1ff.

> And he said: "To a disciple (*śrāvaka*) of the Blessed One."
>
> "But, lord, that was an Ājīvaka, not a disciple of the Blessed One!"
>
> Then it occurred to King Bimbisāra: "I must certainly do something about this! (*etad eva me karaṇīyaṃ bhavatv iti*).

He then goes to the Buddha, explains what happened, and requests that the Buddha insist on some distinctive mark on the robes of the monks (*aho vata bhagavann āryakāṇāṃ cīvarakeṣu kiṃcic cihna prajñāpayet*). The Buddha, being so prompted, does so, and Buddhist monks end up with robes of a distinctive pattern.

The recognition on the part of the *Vinayadharas* who redacted this text of the causal link between what a monk wore and his public image and social identity could, of course, hardly be more explicit. And the problem here is not in doubt: in the "outside," in the eyes and minds of the state (i.e., the king), of non-Buddhist and Buddhist alike, there is altogether too much confusion and consternation, and this confusion has serious consequences. It makes the king look foolish in supporting the Buddhists; it misleads nonbelievers in regard to the position of the state; and it upsets believers. What is more practically at stake is perhaps clearer in yet another case of mistaken identity, this one found in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*.[15]

This second case of mistaken identity is purely narrative. The donor Anāthapiṇḍada invites the Buddha and the community of monks to his house for lunch. They come, and Anāthapiṇḍada gives instructions to his doorman, saying: "Adherents of other religious groups (*anyatīrthyaka*) are not to be admitted so long as the community of monks headed by the Buddha has not eaten. Only after that will I give to them." While the group is still eating the great ascetic monk Mahākāśyapa, who has just returned from the forest (*āraṇyaka*), comes to Anāthapiṇḍada's door. He is described as "having long hair and beard and disreputable robes" (*dīrghakeśaśmaśrulūhacīvara*), and is, of course, turned away for reasons he himself expresses: " brahmins and householders do not recognize me as a Buddhist monk" (*māṃ brāhmaṇagṛhapatayaḥ śramaṇaśākyaputrīya iti na jānate*). Here, it seems, the messages are many. A monk who lives in the forest will not be recognized or acknowledged to be a Buddhist monk—this is of a piece with a deeply ambivalent if not outright negative attitude toward the forest that is expressed in a variety of ways in this *Vinaya*.[16] To be accepted as a Buddhist monk one must not present in public an unkempt appearance nor be seen in disreputable robes. If one appears unkempt and wears disreputable—"coarse" or "bad" or "pernicious" or even "evil"—robes, one will be taken for a *tīrthyaka*.[17] But however the messages be taken, the final one must certainly be this: the doors of wealthy, respectable donors will be shut to such a monk, and this is a message that is hard to miss.

[15] *Bhaiṣajyavastu*, N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts* vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 79.1ff.

[16] For just two striking examples see *Kṣudrakavastu*, Derge Tha 102a.5–104b.2; Da 35b.2–36a.2, in both of which staying in the forest is assocated with monks getting into sexual difficulties.

[17] For the range of meanings for Sanskrit *lūha* see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* under both *lūha* and *lūkha*, as well as the related forms cited there.

Given the obvious sensitivity to the issue of a monk's appearance in the "outside" on the part of *Vinaya* writers, it is easy to see why the author or redactor of the *Lalitavistara* structured his text as he did, and why wearing a shroud would have to be handled with circumspection. Moreover, if even generically disreputable (*lūha*) robes were a problem, it is not hard to see how robes made from the garments of the dead would have been even more so. One does not have to look very far in at least this *Vinaya*, for example, to find evidence for the fact that the Buddhist monks who compiled it shared the broad brahmanical aversion and dread of any contact with a corpse. A single instance need only be cited.

The redactors of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* framed a set of rules that could only have been designed to bring Buddhist monastic practice in regard to handling a dead body into line with brahmanical notions of purity and pollution, and these rules had a long shelf life, being picked up and perpetuated in *Mūlasarvāstivādin* monastic handbooks. In the canonical version the text says that after the monks had performed the full complement of rituals for the sake and benefit of their deceased fellow-monk, they simply dispersed without further ceremony. But this met, according to the text itself, with "outside" social disapproval: "But then brahmins and householders derided them saying: 'Buddhist monks (*śākya'i bu'i dge sbyong = śramaṇaśākyaputrīya*), after carrying away a corpse, do not bathe and yet disperse like that—they are polluted (*gtsang sbra med pa = aśauca*).'" Such a characterization or claim would be, of course, both dangerous and deleterious for any sedentary and dependent monastic community, and the response put into the Buddha's mouth is unequivocal. When informed of the situation he is made to say:

> "Monks must not disperse in that manner, but must bathe!"
>
> They all started to bathe, but the Blessed One said: "Everyone need not bathe. Those who came in contact (with the corpse) must wash themselves together with their robes! Others need only wash their hands and feet!"[18]

This becomes in Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, for example:

> *spṛṣṭavadbhiḥ sacelasnānasya | anyair hastapādaprakṣālanam* |[19]

There can, it seems, be very little doubt that the values behind this rule—and a rather large number of other rules in this same *Vinaya*—are brahmanical, not Buddhist, and this widespread sensitivity to and awareness of brahmanical values on the part of the redactors of this *Vinaya* make it difficult to maintain that they were unaware of

[18] This set of rules is treated at some length in G. Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks*, pp. 215ff.; and is again available in translation in G. Schopen, "Deaths, Funerals, and the Division of Property in a Monastic Code," in *Buddhism in Practice*, D. S. Lopez, Jr., ed., pp. 488–489 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). For the handbooks, see next note.

[19] *Vinaya-sūtra (Sankrityayana)* 119.28 = *'dul ba'i mdo, Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba* Wu 99a.3 (see also Viṁākhadeva, *Vinayakārikā, Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba* Shu 54b.6). —Note that the abbreviated form used here will be used throughout for all references to R. Sankrityayana, *Vinayasūtra* of Bhadanta Gunaprabha (Singhi Jain Śāstra Śikṣāpītha. Singhi Jain Series—74) (Bombay, 1981).

what wearing the clothes of the dead would have signaled or meant to an even moderately brahminized "outside."

One again does not have to look very far in brahminical normative literature to discover the starkly negative value associated with what the dead wore. In the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, for example, in its catalogue of excluded and low-born, it is *āyogava* women "who are non-āryas" and who "eat despicable food" who "wear the clothes of the dead (*mṛtavastrabhṛt*)."[20] A little later in the same chapter it says:

> "*Caṇḍālas* and *Śvapacas* [dog-cookers], however, must live outside the village; . . . their property consists of dogs and donkeys; their garments are the clothes of the dead (*mṛtacela*); they eat in broken vessels; their ornaments are of iron; and they constantly roam about. A man who follows the law should never seek any dealings with them (*na taiḥ samayam anvicchet puruṣo dharmam ācaran*). . . . They should carry away the corpses of those without relatives—that is the settled rule."[21]

There is obviously more than one way to understand the expressions *mṛtavastra* and *mṛtacela*. Both could be taken to refer to clothes that belonged to the deceased, without necessarily implying that his corpse was dressed or wrapped in them. But Kullūka glosses the second of these with *śavavastra*, which would seem more certainly to mean "shroud"—*śavavastra* is in fact the first Sanskrit equivalent that Monier-Williams gives for English "shroud."[22] Moreover, Buddhist sources—as we will see—and brahmanical sources too, seem to collapse the two possibilities, or to refer to both the deceased's clothing and what he or she is wrapped in as being left in the "burning grounds."

But if some ambiguity must remain in regard to "the clothes of the dead" or "a shroud for a corpse," there is no doubt about the associations of wearing either or both: such apparel is associated with "non-āryas," eaters of "despicable food," *Caṇḍālas* and dog-cookers—clearly not the sort that a respectable person would want to have anything to do with. There is also very little doubt that Buddhist authors in the Middle Period would have known this, whether they were redacting the *Lalitavistara* or compiling the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*. And while this might account for why the

[20] For the moment, see J. L. Shastri, *Manusmṛti with the Sanskrit Commentary Manvartha-Muktāvalī of Kullūka Bhaṭṭa* (Delhi, 1983), X.35 = W. Doniger and B. K. Smith, *The Laws of Manu* (London, 1991), p. 239. I have, however, had the very good fortune to have seen P. Olivelle, *Mānavadharmaśāstra. A Critical Edition with an Annotated Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), and it is his translation that I quote here and below.

[21] Shastri, *Manusmṛti*, X.52 = Doniger and Smith, *The Laws of Manu*, p. 242. For the status—or lack thereof—of *Caṇḍālas* and the stridently negative cultural attitudes against them, see R. S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India. A Social History of the Lower Order down to circa A.D. 600*, 2nd rev. ed. (Delhi, 1980), pp. 139ff. (For how these horrific attitudes might be translated into modern terms, see T. O'Neill, "Untouchables," *National Geographic*, June 2003, 2–31.) See also below, especially for the literary use of elements of the image of the *Caṇḍāla*, particularly in some Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature.

[22] Shastri, *Manusmṛti*, 412.13; M. Monier-Williams, *English-Sanskrit Dictionary* (Oxford, 1899), 740.

former narratively concealed the Bodhisattva's loin-cloth, it does not account for why it was worn at all, or why the latter—as we will see—did not categorically forbid the wearing of such stuff. In other, seemingly more positive, cases the compilers of this *Vinaya* show no such hesitations to do so. They categorically rule, for example, that a monk must not wear the *yajñopavīta* or "sacred thread," which they—like the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*—call the *brahmasūtra*:[23]

> The Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying in Śrāvastī, in the Jetavana, in the Park of Anāthapiṇḍada.
>
> The Group-of-Six monks went into Śrāvastī in the morning for alms. They saw a brahmin wearing the sacred thread (*tshang pa'i skud pa = brahmasūtra*) who had gone for alms and had received a great deal of both food and drink. The Group-of-Six said, "O Joy, O Rapture! This is a fine method. We too should do it thus!"
>
> The next day unbelievers saw them coming for alms wearing sacred threads. They were contemptuous, saying "Salutations, salutations!"
>
> The Group-of-Six retorted: "You wretches, do you not even know to whom salutation is to be made, and to whom reverence is to be paid?"
>
> They said, "In this case how could we know? Since elder brahmins are those to whom salutation is made, and monks those who are to be reverenced, why did we make salutation to you monks, not reverence?—Noble Ones, we took you to be brahmins, not monks (*'phags pa dag bdag cag gis khyed bram ze lags par 'tshal gyi dge slong du ni ma lags so* |). Since it was so, and since we did not know, you really must forgive us!"[24]
>
> The Group-of-Six remained silent.
>
> The other monks, having heard about this, reported the matter to the Blessed One.
>
> The Blessed One thought to himself: "How could what is a fault appear small since this is what follows from wearing the sacred thread? Henceforth, a monk must not wear the sacred thread! If he does so he comes to be guilty of an offence."[25]

[23] P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* (Poona, 1941), p. 293.

[24] All of this said with, presumably, no little irony.

[25] *Kṣudrakavastu*, Derge Tha 6a.3-6b.2. For "the Group-of-Six" monks met both here and below, a group of amusing, disruptive, but learned monks who manipulate the rules in such a way that they must be continually clarified and emended, see G. Schopen,

The rule here is also digested in the *Vinayasūtra*, where it appears as *na brahmasūtraprāvṛtiṃ bhajeta*,[26] but the canonical account that delivers it, like several we have already seen, would again appear to indicate a clear awareness on the part of the compilers of this code that what their "monks" wore determined how they were socially perceived and behaved toward. There is further acknowledgment here, moreover, that what you wore could determine what you received. But the focus here is on the issue of confusion or the clouding of identity and, as in previous cases, the response is unequivocal: a rule is made that Buddhist monks must not wear what blurs their social identity.

The redactors of our Code, then, show themselves to be perfectly capable of directly legislating against elements of appearance and apparel that could affect the public image of a monk that they thought appropriate. The obvious willingness to do so both here and in other cases, however, only renders their approach to the question of the "clothes of the dead" that much more curious.

The most easily locatable Buddhist monk who wore "the clothes of the dead" is undoubtedly the *śmāśānika* monk, the monk "who frequents cemeteries." This type of practice is, of course, one of the *dhūtaguṇas*, a more or less standard list of ascetic—even radically ascetic—practices that are referred to throughout much of Buddhist literature. But while this list of ascetic practices is well known, their role and place in the history of Indian Buddhist monasticism is not, and in fact we know very little for certain about them.[27] At least two things, however, seem to be relatively sure: the authors of a strong, seemingly early strand of Mahāyāna Sūtra literature advocated their undertaking, or appear to have been "attempting to reinvent, revitalize or resurrect these extreme ascetic practices";[28] and the compilers of the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* seem to have been intent on doing everything they could do to demonize and discourage their practice, to poke fun at them, and to erect legal, economic, and social barriers to their undertaking.

While the advocacy of these practices in a significant part of "early" Mahāyāna Sūtra literature is visible enough in general outline, it—like almost everything connected to this literature—needs to be much more carefully and comprehensively studied, and that is not possible here: it will be a large project. Even a comprehensive treatment of the handling of these practices in the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* is not

"On Buddhist Monks and Dreadful Deities: Some Monastic Devices for Updating the Dharma," in *Gedenkschrift for J. W. de Jong*, M. Hara, ed., pp. 161–184 (Tokyo, 2003).

[26] *Vinaya-sūtra* (Sankrityayana) 55.5 = *'dul ba'i mdo, Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba* Wu, 43b.5.

[27] See J. Dantinne, *Les qualitiés de l'ascete (dhutaguṇa). Etude sémantique et doctrinale* (Brussels, 1991) which—while rich in detail—still does not take us very far. More interesting—if justifiably tentative—is R. A. Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India. A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations* (New York, 1994), pp. 293–323.

[28] G. Schopen, "The Mahāyāna and the Middle Period in Indian Buddhism," 22 and the textual sources cited in n. 41 there.

feasible here—it too is not a small project. Fortunately, however, the redactors of this *Vinaya* focused with particular vigor on one *dhūtaguṇa* which is of specific interest here—dressing like the dead. This practice, the practice of monks wearing shrouds or the clothes of the dead, seems to have attracted the attention of the compilers of this *Vinaya* to a much greater degree than any other single ascetic practice, and seems to have become for them emblematic of all *dhūtaguṇas*. They return to it again and again. A presentation of their views on this practice—in fact a presentation of their presentations—must be shaped, however, by the nature of our surviving sources. None of the major presentations of this issue have come down to us in their Sanskrit original, so the first step is to simply make them available and, at this stage, the most effective way of doing that is, perhaps, to translate into English the Tibetan translations of them that we have. This, of course, means that we see them through a particular filter, but the Tibetan translations of Buddhist Sanskrit texts are, on the whole, notoriously excellent and close, and we have enough of this *Vinaya* in Sanskrit to allow us to see that its Tibetan translation is also of this sort. Indeed, in most instances the original Sanskrit vocabulary can be reconstructed with some assurance. Moreover, the texts alone—even in translation—can carry much of the exposition or argument—they are in their main thrust remarkably straightforward and, again, do not require a labored exegesis. But perhaps the greatest advantage in presenting the texts *in extenso* is that this will allow the reader to catch something of their tone and this, in the end, may be one of the most important things about them. It might as well reveal, at least indirectly, something of the literary qualities of this *Vinaya*. Sylvain Lévi in describing this monastic code said, already long ago:

> Un écrivain dont la fougue verbale et l'imagination surabondante évoquent le souvenir de Rabelais, et du meilleur de Rabelais, a pris prétexte des récits ternes et desséches qui se répétaient dans le couvents à l'appui des prescriptions de la discipline ecclésiastique, pour en tirer une succession de contes qui veulent Étre édifiants, mais qui sont surtout amusants, pittoresques ou émouvants à souhait. Le *Vinaya* des Mūlasarvāstivādin's est une espèce de Bṛhatkathā à l'usage des moines.[29]

Lévi in fact called this compilation "un des chefs-d'oeuvre de la littérature sanscrite," and whatever one thinks of this claim, it is not improbable that this *Vinaya* does indeed represent one of the single most important literary achievements of the Buddhists in the period between empires. This too it is important to see.

The *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* has a particularly rich cycle of stories, mostly preserved in Sanskrit, about the Buddha's "evil" and none-too-bright cousin named—very likely with tongue in cheek—Devadatta or "John Doe." His attempts to emulate the Buddha are often ridiculous and have disastrous consequences. When he has engineered Ajātaśatru's rise to kingship, for example, he says to him "I have established you in kingship. You must also establish me in buddhahood (*tvam mayā rājye pratiṣṭhāpitaḥ.*

[29] S. Lévi, "Note sur des manuscrits sanscrits provenant de bamiyan (Afghanistan) et de gilgit (cachemire)," *Journal Asiatique* (1932): 23.

tvam api mām buddhatve pratiṣṭhāpaya iti)." The silliness of such a statement could not have been lost on anyone. But Ajātaśatru also at this stage appears as a dope—he thinks buddhahood is a state of the body, and says in response, for example, that the (or a) Blessed One has as a characteristic mark (*lakṣaṇa*) the shape of wheel on the sole of his feet. Devadatta, undeterred, summons a blacksmith and insists that he brand the soles of his feet with the mark of wheel. The result, of course, is only intense and excruciating pain.[30]

With this and similar stories, it is obvious that the redactors of this *Vinaya* went to particular trouble to set Devadatta up as a bozo—not so much evil as stupid—and it is almost certainly not accidental that it is he, and he alone in this *Vinaya*, who forcefully advocates and insists on the necessity of the *dhūtaguṇas* or extreme ascetic practices for Buddhist monks, or that it is this insistence which is also said to have been the cause of the first serious split in the monastic community.[31] The association of stupidity and disruption with these practices also must have been obvious.

If there are discernible elements of slapstick in the stories concerning Devadatta, there are also similar elements in the account of a monk forebodingly named Mahākāla that occurs in the Vibhaṅga section of our *Vinaya*. Mahākāla is a quintessential *śmāśānika* monk—in fact, he defines the type in this *Vinaya*. But his story not only ends with a rule that would have been—and was probably designed to be—a formidable obstacle to the practice of this "ideal," it is also a story about misunderstandings and perceptions gone awry, about rumors of cannibalism, and about Buddhist monks scaring the bejeezus out of children.[32]

> The Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying in Śrāvastī, in the Park of Prince Jeta, the Garden of Anāthapiṇḍada. The Venerable Mahākāla then was one who obtained everything from the cemetery. His alms bowl was from the cemetery (*dur khrod pa* = *śmāśānika*); his robe too was from the

[30] R. Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu* (Serie Orientale Roma 49.2), part 2 (Rome, 1978), pp. 164–165.

[31] Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu*, part 2, pp. 204, 271. See also—without necessarily accepting their relative chronology for the various accounts—B. Mukherjee, *Die Überlieferung von Devadatta, dem Widersacher des Buddha in den kanonischen Schriften* (Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft. Beiheft J) (Munich, 1966), esp. pp. 74–86; A. Bareau, "Les agissements de devadatta selon les chaptires relatifs au schisme dans les divers *vinayapiṭaka*," *Bulletin de 'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 78 (1991): 87–132.

[32] *Vinayavibhaṅga*, Derge Ja 154b.2–156b.7—It should be noted that here and throughout I have generally rendered the Sanskrit *śmaśāna* (or its Tibetan equivalent) as "cemetery." It is also frequently translated as "cremation ground" or "burning ground," but it is clear from a variety of literary sources that bodies were often not cremated at such places, but simply deposited or left there; see G. Schopen, "Hierarchy and Housing in a Buddhist Monastic Code. A Translation of the Sanskrit Text of the *Śayanāsanavastu* of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. Part One," *Buddhist Literature* 2 (2000): 163–164 (vi.7).

cemetery; his alms, his bedding, and seat were all from the cemetery as well.

And what is an alms bowl from a cemetery? It is like this—the relatives cast the pot of one who has died and past away into the cemetery. Then the Venerable Mahākāla, squaring the pieces and having heated them,[33] takes possession of it (*byin gyis brlabs pa = adhitiṣṭhati*) as an alms bowl and keeps it. Just so is an alms bowl from a cemetery.

What is a robe from a cemetery? It is like this—the relatives cast the garments (*gos dag = vastra*) of one who has died and past away into the cemetery. The Venerable Mahākāla washes and stitches them and, having altered them, he takes possession of them as a robe and keeps them. Just so is a robe from a cemetery.[34]

What are alms from a cemetery? It is like this—the relatives cast five balls of food (*zas = piṇḍaka*) for one who has died and passed away into the cemetery. The Venerable Mahākāla takes them and makes them his food. Just so are alms from a cemetery.

What are bedding and seat from a cemetery? It is like this—the Venerable Mahākāla lives in the cemetery. Just so are bedding and seat from a cemetery.

When there were epidemics (*mi ngas = māri*) among the majority of people then the Venerable Mahākāla grew in fatness, skin, muscle, and blood, and occasionally he did not even enter the village for alms. But when there were no epidemics among the majority of people, then the Venerable Mahākāla became emaciated, weak, lean, dehydrated, and feeble, and again and again he entered the village for alms.

The village doorkeeper, having noticed this pattern, thought: "This Noble One Mahākāla, when there are epidemics among the majority of people, grows in fatness, skin, muscle, and blood. He occasionally does not even enter the village for alms. But when there are no epidemics, then this Noble One Mahākāla becomes emaciated, weak, lean, dehydrated, and feeble. Then again and again he enters the village for alms. Since this is so, I wonder if this Noble One Mahākāla is not eating human flesh?"

[33] For the process of repairing a bowl by the application of heat, see P. V. Bapat and V. V. Gokhale, *Vinaya-sūtra* (Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series No. 22) (Patna, 1982), pp. xxxiv, 37.20ff.

[34] For a text in this same *Vinaya* in which laymen appear to deny that they routinely discard "vessels and garments" with the deceased, see G. Schopen, "Dead Monks and Bad Debts: Some Provisions of a Buddhist Monastic Inheritance Law," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 44 (2001): 132ff.

Soon everywhere it was heard "The Noble One Mahākāla eats human flesh."

Now in Śrāvastī there lived a brahmin. He took a wife from a family of equal standing. He played, enjoyed himself and made love with her. From that dallying, playing, and making love a daughter was born. She was looked after, nurtured and grew up.

At a later time that brahmin died. His relatives adorned a bier with blue and yellow and red and white cloths and carried him to the cemetery. When they had cremated him they dispersed. But the dead brahmin's wife and daughter went to one side and sat down.

The Venerable Mahākāla was sitting there staring into her face. The daughter saw the Venerable Mahākāla sitting there staring into her face. Having seen him she said to her mother: "Mother, this Venerable Mahākāla sits there ruminating like a half-blind old female crow."

The Blessed One then said to the monks: "Monks, a certain brahmin's daughter speaks and reviles. Because she has made this abusive remark in regard to a great disciple who is like Mt. Meru, this brahmin's daughter will be reborn in five hundred births as a half-blind old female crow."

Everywhere it was heard: "The Blessed One has predicted that this brahmin's daughter will be reborn in five hundred births as a half-blind old female crow."

That brahmin's wife too heard that the Blessed One had predicted that her daughter would be reborn in five hundred births as a half-blind old female crow. Then that brahmin woman, taking her daughter, went to the Blessed One. Having arrived there she honored with her head the feet of the Blessed One, and she said to him: "Blessed One, I beg you to forgive my daughter. She did not make this abusive remark with much ill-will."

"Brahmin woman, did I pronounce a curse in regard to someone?[35] If in fact your daughter had made this abusive remark with much ill-will, the

[35] What lies behind this seemingly curious rhetorical question is almost certainly a Buddhist "refutation" of a pervasive Indian cultural expectation. Goldman, for example, has said: "The motif of a curse pronounced in return for some insult or injury to a venerable personage is, to be sure, enormously common in the Sanskrit epics"; and: "Indian tradition has made a literary convention of representing the father/guru/sage as a distant, irascible, and terrifying figure ready to explode with the most nightmarish curses for the most trivial provocation" (R. P. Goldman, "Karma, Guilt, and Buried Memories: Public Fantasy and Private Reality in Traditional India," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105 (1985): 413–425; esp. 422, 425). Our text, in effect, has the Buddha deny that he is such a figure.

situation would have been such that she would have been reborn in hells."

Brahmin boys in Śrāvastī also heard it said that the Noble One Mahākāla ate human flesh. They said, "Guys, we should put the Noble Mahākāla to a test and see whether or not it's true. One of us should pretend to be a dead person, the rest of us will then perform the honors in the cemetery!"

One of them was to pretend to be dead—"You," they said, "must pretend to be dead!"

He said: "But will I be eaten?"

They said: "We will protect you."

He pretended to be dead, and the others, anointing him with bdellium and oil, having put him on a bier, began to leave Śrāvastī. The Venerable Mahākāla was at the same time entering Śrāvastī for alms. When he saw them he thought: "Why should I, for a purpose hard to fulfill, enter the village for alms when—should I turn back—the five *piṇḍakas* are to be had?" So thinking, he turned back.

The brahmin boy said to the others: "You guys, the Noble One Mahākāla is coming back—will I not be eaten?"

They said: "If you are, so will we be eaten."

They threw him into the cemetery and, going to one side, they sat hiding their heads in the brush and in their cloaks. A jackal started to wander around there, and the Venerable Mahākāla thought: "That jackal will eat the five *piṇḍakas*—should I not preserve my food?" Thinking that, he began to run back very fast, and the brahmin boy, being terrified, began to cry "I am being eaten! I am being eaten!"

The other brahmin boys, grabbing sticks, rushed forward saying: "How can the Noble One bear the banner of a Ṛṣi and still do such awful evil things?"

He said: "What have I done?—Has human flesh been eaten? Did you boys see me holding a sword, or cutting off any flesh, or eating it?"

They said: "But why did you hurry back so fast?"

"You should have known, boys, that a jackal was eating the five piṇḍakas, and thinking 'should I not preserve my food,' I ran back very fast."

But because it still was not clear whether the Noble One Mahākāla ate the

five *piṇḍakas* or ate human flesh, the monks reported to the Blessed One that it was said thus everywhere: "The Noble Mahākāla eats human flesh."

Then the Blessed One considered: "How could what is a danger appear small—this is what occurs when monks eat what has not been rendered 'received as a gift' (*apratigrāhita-bhukti*)."[36] Having considered: "Only that food which monks render 'received as a gift' is properly possessed." He said: "Henceforth, only that is to be eaten which monks render 'received as a gift.'"

This is by almost any standards a curious text. It starts with a detailed definition of a cemetery-dwelling monk, but ends with a formal rule that would in effect deny such a monk what is said to be his primary means of sustenance. The rule says—using the technical language of donation—that a monk can only eat what he has formally received, i.e., what has been given to him, and that by definition excludes the *piṇḍakas*—those, as the text says, are "for the one who has died." This, at least at first sight, is odd. Equally odd, however, is the fact that between the initial account of Mahākāla's weight changes and the rumors they give rise to, and the rule designed to avoid such rumor, are two seemingly gratuitous tales about a cemetery monk inadvertently, but none the less surely, terrifying a little girl and stimulating in her a thought that sends her on a long series of unpleasant rebirths, and both scaring a bunch of boys and being the object of their pranks. The Buddha's defence of Mahākāla in the first tale is decidedly weak—he says he "is like Mt. Meru," but since, as we will see, cemetery-dwelling monks are routinely described as tough customers this does not necessarily make him admirable, and the Buddha does not indicate that he is, or should be, an object of reverence. This first tale, moreover, seems oddly unconnected with the rest of the text, but even more gratuitous, perhaps, is the second tale. When all is said and done, the test itself is—as the text explicitly indicates—utterly inconclusive: it has no narrative function. Indeed, if both tales were entirely omitted the rule would follow naturally from the gatekeepers' reasoned suspicions, and nothing would have been lost. Nothing, that is, except for some veiled but visibly unkind characterizations of ascetic monks, and the clear implication that they are the source of damaging rumor. Indeed, since the rule itself is about food in general, and since the *śmāśānika* monk is only one of a list of monks who might eat food that was not formally given, the redactors inclusion of the account of Mahākāla here must have been intended to make it perfectly clear that the rule applied with particular force to the practice of *śmāśānika* monks. To see more clearly what is going on here it might, however, be advantageous to look as well at some other texts in this *Vinaya* which deal with the same kind of monk.

The text from the *Vibhaṅga* does not, of course, deal directly with taking cloth from a cemetery—its focus is on food. This, however, does not mean that the issue of cloth is ignored. In fact, the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* addresses the issue over and over again,

36 This is a technical way of saying: "what has been specifically given to him."

but always, it seems, with the same intent: to make the practice of taking cemeterial cloth difficult, if not impossible; and to marginalize, if not ostracize, Buddhist monks who engage in it. The redactors of this *Vinaya* appear to have taken several different approaches to "the problem," one of which was connected with property law and the definition of property. The rudiments of this approach are already visible in a little text from the *Uttaragrantha*.[37]

> Some in Śrāvastī conjured corpses, and when a householder conjured for a certain end, and that end was accomplished, he covered the corpse with a white cloth and left it there.
>
> When a monk named Kālananda came there he took that cloth. But the other monks said: "For you an offence leading to expulsion (*pārājika*) has occurred."
>
> "On what grounds?"
>
> "You took the cloth of a corpse that had not been given."
>
> When the monk felt remorse the Blessed one said: "There is no offence leading to expulsion, but there is a gross offence (*sthūlātyaya*)."

Here, at least initially, the monk who takes cloth from a cemetery is charged with a *pārājika*, the most serious category of offences in Buddhist *Vinayas*. He is charged in effect with theft, and theft is defined in the *Vinaya* in purely secular terms: theft for Buddhist *Vinaya* is what the state classifies as theft.[38] If this classification of the act were allowed to stand it would, of course, have rendered the practice legally impossible for any monk who wanted to remain in good standing (*prakṛtisthaka*), at least in communities where the rules were actually implemented. The Buddha's judgment, however, weakens or lessens the charge, but only slightly. He declares—and the role of the monk's "remorse" (*kaukṛtya*) may here be causal—that it is not a *pārājika*, but it is a "gross offence." Without going into the minutiae of *Vinaya* classification schemes, suffice it to say that it still remains a serious infraction of monastic rule.

This little text, then, provides a first indication of the complicated attitude that the redactors of this *Vinaya* had in regard to monks taking cloth from cemeteries. They either do not want to, or cannot, forbid the practice outright. But they also, apparently, do not want to encourage it. Here it totters on the edge of infractions leading to expulsion and is freighted with consequences. It is, it seems, to be avoided by "good" monks. This, however, is not the end of the legal maneuvering.

[37] *Uttaragrantha*, Derge Pa 4a.5–4b.1.

[38] See the wording of the second *pārājika* in L. Chandra, "Unpublished Gilgit Fragment of the Prātimokṣa-sūtra," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens* 4 (1960): 2; L. Finot, "Le prātimokṣasūtra des sarvāstivādins," *Journal Asiatique* (1913): 477; etc.

Another, somewhat longer text from the *Uttaragrantha* is much more explicitly legalistic and definitional in its apparent attempts to restrict the practice of Buddhist monks taking cloth from cemeteries. It also introduces an additional complication: it at least narratively asserts that other groups or individuals have, by virtue of secular law ("the order of the king"), prior rights to property left in cemeteries, and it severely narrows the range of funereal cloth that Buddhist monks have access to.[39]

> The setting was in Rājagṛha.
>
> The Group-of-Six monks went to the Śītavana cemetery and when they saw that many possessions of the dead had been left—umbrellas, wood, and cloth—one among them said: "O Joy, O Rapture! Since we have found cloth from a rubbish heap (*pāṃśukūla*) we should carry it off!"
>
> Saying "O Joy, that is good, that is good, let us carry it off," they took it and left.
>
> When the outcaste (*cāṇḍāla*) keepers of the cemetery came they thought: "There is nothing at all in the cemetery—someone has surely robbed it!" So thinking they also thought: "Since whoever robbed it will be inclined to do it again, and will surely return, we should hide and wait." Thinking that they got into the thick brush and continued to wait every day.
>
> When seven or eight days had passed, the Group-of-Six said: "O Joy, O Rapture, since we have not gone to the cemetery for a long time now, there is a good chance of getting a little something—we should go again!" Saying that they went.
>
> When the monks began to take the cloth, umbrellas, and wood that had been left, the outcastes in the thick brush saw them, rushed out, and confronted them, saying "Noble Ones, since we—our brothers, kinsmen, and companions—have been designated according to the order of the king for this cloth from the burning ground (*śmāśānika*), how can you carry away the possessions of the dead from a cemetery that has a proprietor (*svāmika*)?"
>
> The Group-of-Six said, "Sirs, we take cloth from a rubbish heap (*pāṃśukūlika*)!"
>
> But the outcastes said: "This however, is cloth from a cemetery so that is certainly wrong."
>
> The Group-of-Six, having no response, stood there saying nothing.

[39] *Uttaragrantha*, Derge Pa 164a.7–165a.2.

> The monks reported to the Blessed One what had occurred, and the Blessed One said: "Criticism by outcastes is a serious accusation, monks. Therefore, monks must not take from a cemetery that has a proprietor cloth from a rubbish heap! If monks take from a cemetery that has a proprietor cloth from a rubbish heap they come to be guilty of a transgression."
>
> Then, further, the truly devout said in regard to such cloth "Noble One, carry it away as it pleases you!" But the monks had some doubts and did not accept it.
>
> The Blessed one said: "If it is said 'accept it as it pleases you,' it should be accepted, and there must be no doubt in that case!"

In the end, after presenting certain Buddhist monks as thieves and *Cāṇḍālas* as lawyers, this is a story about classificatory confusions and the conflict of monastic and secular law that results. The Group-of-Six—as is their wont—justify their actions (though not their rapacity) by invoking a perfectly legitimate, if almost entirely rhetorical, Buddhist monastic ideal: they claim to be those who "take cloth from a rubbish heap." This source of cloth is, moreover, the one that every Buddhist monk is told about as a part of his ordination when he is asked "are you . . . able to subsist, for as long as you live, with cloth from a rubbish heap?"[40] It does not matter for our purposes that as soon as the newly ordained says that he is able, the necessity to do so is immediately removed—apparently in all *Vinayas* as we have them—by allowing a long list of permissible options (*atireka-lābha*): silk, muslin, fine Benares cloth, etc.[41] What matters in our story is that the Group-of-Six classifies cloth from a cemetery as cloth from a rubbish heap, and it is this classification that the *Cāṇḍālas*—invoking secular law—reject. If they are correct, and it appears that they are, then the practices of a *śmāśānika* monk described in the *Vibhaṅga* are actually or potentially, from the point of view of secular law, illegal. Since there is ample evidence elsewhere indicating that the compilers of this *Vinaya* were well aware of secular law, there is a very good chance that they knew this, and either felt a need to resolve the issue of illegality or saw in it an opportunity to undercut practices which they also did not approve of. They were, however, careful, or could only go so far. They did not, perhaps could not, completely forbid the practice, but they did put in place a rule that would have narrowly contained it, and at the same time skirt the legality issue. The redactors of our *Vinaya* had the Buddha allow monks to take cloth only from a cemetery that had no proprietor, or when they had formal permission, i.e., when it was in effect given to them, and, although we obviously have no statistics here, these conditions would almost certainly have been in effect in only a tiny minority of cases.

What is established by narrative and rule in the story of the Venerable Mahākāla or the tale of the Group-of-Six is, moreover, elsewhere established by straightforward

[40] B. Jinananda, *Upasampadājñaptiḥ* (Tibetan Sanskrit Works 6) (Patna, 1961), 20.1.

[41] B. Jinananda, *Upasampadājñaptiḥ*, 20.3; L. Wieger, *Bouddhisme chinois, I: Vinaya: Monachisme et discipline; Hinayāna, véhicule inférieur* (Paris, 1910), p. 201; I. B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline* (London, 1951), vol. 4, p. 75, etc.

definition, and the "debate" about whether cemeterial cloth can be classified as *pāṃśukūla*, or "cloth from a rubbish heap," is solved by lexicographical fiat. In both the *Bhikṣuvibhaṅga* and the *Bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga*, for example, *śmāśānika* or cemeterial cloth is defined as only "that which is taken from a cemetery that has no keeper (*parigraha*)." Both sources, moreover, give detailed definitions of *pāṃśukūla*—it is cloth from a highway or thrown out in the forest or on a river bank, etc., cloth that is torn or rotten, eaten by rats, etc.—but any reference to cemeterial cloth is notable by its absence: *pāṃśukūla* does not, by *Vinaya* definition, therefore include *śmāśānika* cloth; *śmāśānika* cloth is therefore not *pāṃśukūla*.[42] But both sources also include what appears to be, at first sight, a curious concession. Both list as a separate category of cloth that is called in Tibetan *gos bor blangs* or *blangs pa*, and while there is not yet an attested certain Sanskrit equivalent for this expression there is little doubt about what it means, and none about what the redactors of this *Vinaya* thought it was. *Gos bor blangs pa* must mean "discarded cloth that is brought or carried off," or "discarded cloth that is taken or accepted"; and it is described with some precision:

> What is discarded cloth that is brought? Namely, when kinsmen know that one of their kin has been struck, died, and passed away, they wrap him in cloth and, after they have carried him out to the cemetery, they carry that cloth back again. Then coming [to the monastery] they give that cloth to the monastic community—that is called "discarded cloth that is brought."[43]

This kind of cloth is, again, in a separate and distinct category: it is neither, by definition, *pāṃśukūla* nor *śmāśānika*. It is also not, quite clearly, the clothing of the dead, but probably something more like a pall, and we may already see here the beginnings of a practice described for modern Theravādin Thailand by Wells, who notes that although called *paṅsukula*, the cloth "presented" to monks in connection with Thai funerals is today "fresh new robes laid across the coffin—not the dusty rags once left at the cremation grounds."[44] This categorization also radically transforms the role of the monks in a direction already present in the final rule of the story of the Group-of-Six: it moves the monks from the role of scavengers to the role of recipients

[42] *Vinayavibhaṅga*, Derge Cha 61b.5ff; *Bhikṣuṇī-vinayavibhaṅga*, Derge Ta 159b.7 ff., for the definitions of both *śmāśānika* and *pāṃśukūla*.

[43] *Vinayavibhaṅga*, Derge Cha 61b.4; *Bhikṣuṇī-vinayavibhaṅga*, Derge Ta 59b.6.

[44] Cited in Phra Khrū Anusaranasāsanakiarti and C. F. Keyes, "Funerary Rites and the Buddhist Meaning of Death: An Interpretative Text from Northern Thailand," *Journal of the Siam Society* 68 (1980): 12 n. 61. For the vagaries of the term *pāṃśakūla* in East Asia see B. Faure, "Quand l'habit fait le moine: The Symbolism of the Kāṣāya in Sōtō Zen," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995): 335–369; J. Kieschnick, "The Symbolism of the Monk's Robe in China," *Asia Major*, 3rd ser. 12 (1999): 9–32, and—with little modification—Kieschnik, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton, 2003), pp. 86–107. Both Faure and Kieschnick refer to the controversy in East Asia about the use of silk for a monk's robes, but silk (*paṭṭaka, kauṁeya, koseyya*, etc.) is already allowed for such a purpose in several of the lists of "permissible options" referred to above (Xinru Liu, *Silk and Religion. An Exploration of Material Life and the Thought of People. AD 600–1200* [Delhi: 1998], p. 54, must be corrected in this regard).

of gifts, and—by interjecting the kinsmen into the process—it separates the monks from the cemetery and, presumably, the impurity. It is now the kinsmen who must initially handle the cloth, and this, again presumably, makes it "presentable." But the procedure required by the definition of this category not only interjects the kinsmen, it also completely removes the individual monk: this cloth is not taken or given to an individual, but to the community as a whole, and that too is a very different matter. Finally, the procedure required by the definition of this kind of cloth—like, but even more so than, the required permission in the *Uttaragrantha*—renders the entire transaction publicly visible and open to observation. Here there are no possibilities for rumors as in the case of the monk Mahākāla, no grounds for the charge of theft as in the cases of Kālananda and the Group-of-Six. Here the corporate image of the community is protected, and that almost certainly was the point.

One might have thought that all this maneuvering and its consequent rulings and requirements would have covered all the bases, but not, apparently, for our redactors. They were nothing if not thorough, and several gaps remained. What, for example, happens when monks find the clothes of the dead outside a cemetery, on a road, for example? They could then be, by *Vinaya* definition, *pāṃśukūla*, and that is a problem. Hence, yet another text in the *Uttaragrantha*.[45]

> The setting was Śrāvastī.
>
> A rich man seized a debtor and then said to him: "You must repay in this amount of time!" Having fixed the time, he let him go.
>
> The debtor thought to himself: "Even though the time has been fixed in such a way I still will not be able to repay it at that time—surely, then, when the time comes, I should go and run away." Having thought that, however, he considered further: "But there will still be much suffering just through being separated from my country and going away—I must surely kill him."
>
> When he had so determined, then he killed him on the road leading to the Jetavana monastery.
>
> In time, when the Group-of-Six saw him [i.e., the dead man] they thought: "We have got here some cloth from a rubbish heap (*pāṃśukūla*)!" So thinking they began to strip him. But when his kinsmen came there, when they saw him and were made to weep, they said to the Group-of-Six: "You have murdered him!"
>
> The Group-of-Six said: "Although we did not murder him, he was surely murdered by a foe!"

[45] *Uttaragrantha*, Derge Pa 111b.6–112a.4.

> The monks reported to the Blessed One what had occurred and the Blessed One said, "Monks, that his relatives are apprehensive is itself an accusation. Therefore, monks must not take cloth from a rubbish heap (*pāṃśukūla*) of this kind. It must be taken only when many people know about it! If it is not done in this way one comes to be guilty of an offence!"

This text too delivers a little tale about classification, potential confusion, and damaging public perceptions of the actions of monks. The Group-of-Six here is—as it usually is—technically correct. Their classification of the cloth as *pāṃśukūla* corresponds with the definition of *pāṃśukūla* in the Vibhaṅga: it is what has been left on a road. The fact that it is still on a body is—technically—immaterial. The Buddha himself is not made to contest the classification. In fact his initial ruling tacitly accepts it. What he is made to do—and this would seem to be the main goal of the redactors—is introduce a distinction between permissible and impermissible kinds of *pāṃśukūla* that once again would make it difficult for Buddhist monks to obtain and use the clothing of dead: "cloth from a rubbish heap of this kind"—i.e., still on a body—must not be taken, even if it is found at a site that would otherwise render it *pāṃśukūla*.

The "problem" addressed in the present tale is also once again familiar. Buddhist monks stripping corpses in this not yet regulated context would still leave members of the monastic community open to serious charges of criminal activity, charges that would necessarily reflect back on the community as a whole. The list of possible charges or public rumors that the use of cloth or clothing of the dead could give rise to is now in fact an impressive one: cannibalism, theft, and murder. And all of this does not include the fact that the practice would also necessarily equate Buddhist monks with *Cāṇḍālas*, "the lowest and most despised of the mixed tribes." Ironically, the second ruling delivered by our text would seem to solve the first problem of accusation or rumor as well as the first ruling did and still allow the practice to continue. But the continuance of the practice under the conditions imposed by the second ruling would also render it publicly visible and therefore reinforce the identity of any monks who engaged in it with *Cāṇḍālas*: many people would necessarily know where their robes came from. That, however, may have been exactly what the redactors of this *Vinaya* may have wanted to do. Certainly our final text would seem to make it very clear that they were trying to arrange things so that any monk who wore clothing of or from the dead would be clearly visible and would pay a heavy price both within the community and outside it.

The tales and texts seen so far are almost exclusively focused on the social consequences, outside the monastery, of Buddhist monks wearing the clothes of the dead. Those consequences—rumor, accusations, confusion—are, of course, damaging and dangerous to the community as a whole, but these texts say very little about the specific consequences for the individual monks who might undertake the practice within the monastery, or inside the community, and these consequences are, if anything, far more severe. These are the focus of our last text, a text from the

Kṣudrakavastu.[46]

The Buddha, the Blessed One, was staying in Śrāvastī, in the Jetavana, in the Park of Anāthapiṇḍada.

At that time there was a young son of a perfumer in Śrāvastī who had gotten a woolen blanket (*la ba* = *kambala*). He was extremely attached to it. After some time he fell ill—and he grieved far more for that woolen blanket than for riches.

Although he was treated with medicines made from roots, stalks, leaves, flowers and fruits, it was no use. When he himself discerned his physical condition he assembled his relatives and said: "When I die you must not cremate me, but wrap me in this blanket and take me out!"

They, trying to assure him, said: "Do all those who get sick die? You will get better, you must not worry."

But his life span was exhausted, and in spite of being attended to and nursed, it was again no use. When he died, because of his excessive attachment to that woolen blanket, he was reborn among the hungry ghosts (*preta*) who have goiters (*galagaṇḍin*). His relatives decorated a bier with blue and yellow and red and white cloths and, wrapping him in that blanket, took him out to the cemetery. When the monks had seen that they said to Kālananda, a cemetery-dwelling monk (*śmāśānika*): "Venerable, the young son of a perfumer has died. His relatives have wrapped him in a woolen blanket and taken him out to the cemetery. You should go and get that discarded cloth (*pāṃśukūla*)."

Kālananda hurried to the cemetery and grabbed it, but that nonhuman who had formerly been the boy said: "Noble Kālananda, you must not take my woolen blanket!"

But a cemetery-dwelling monk generally has a lot of nerve (*sattvavat*), so Kālananda said to him: "Hungry one, you were reborn among the hungry ghosts who have goiters because of your excessive attachment to this woolen blanket. Do you now want to be reborn in hell too? Let go!"

But the hungry ghost did not let go. Because of his own excessive attachment to that blanket, the monk kicked him with his foot and stripped the blanket off. Then, taking it with him, he went to the Jetavana monastery.

[46] *Kṣudrakavastu*, Derge Tha 222b.2–224b.1. There is what appears to be a badly bowdlerized version of this text in the Pāli *Vinaya*. As it stands, and without reference to the commentary, the Pāli text is narratively incoherent; see Horner, *The Book of the Discipline*, pt. 1, p. 97 and notes 1–5 there.

The hungry ghost followed behind him howling, saying "Noble Kālananda, return the woolen blanket!" Furious, he too went to the Jetavana.

Because gods and *nāgas* and *yakṣas* who were devoted to the Buddha were staying in the Jetavana, the hungry ghost, being considered of little power, was not able to enter and sat howling at the door.

Since Buddhas, the Blessed Ones, although they know the answers still make inquiries, the Venerable Ānanda was asked: "Ānanda, why is that nonhuman wailing at the door?"

Ānanda said: "Reverend, Kālananda has taken his woolen blanket."

The Blessed One thought to himself: "It is the case that this nonhuman wails through such attachment that if he does not get his blanket he will vomit warm blood and die." When he had considered that he said to the Venerable Ānanda: "Go, Ānanda! Say this to the Monk Kālananda: 'You must give the blanket back to this nonhuman! If it is not given back he will certainly vomit warm blood and die. When you are going to give it back, then you must also say: "First you must go!" When he has gone back to the cemetery, then you must also say "Lie down!" When he has lain down then you should spread the blanket on top of him!'"

Saying "Yes, Blessed One," the Venerable Ānanda assented to the Blessed One and went to the Venerable Kālananda. When he arrived he said this to him: "You should understand that this is from the mouth of the Blessed One: 'The blanket must be returned to this nonhuman! If it is not given back he will certainly vomit warm blood and die. When you are going to give it back, then you must also say: "First you must go!" When he has gone back to the cemetery, then you must also say "Lie down!" When he has lain down then you should spread the blanket on top of him!'" The Venerable Ānanda repeated thus the words of the Blessed One as he had spoken them and departed.

Kālananda then said this to that nonhuman: "If you want the woolen blanket, first you must go and then I will return it." When he went back then Kālananda also said: "If you want the blanket you must lie down!" When he had lain down Kālananda covered him. The nonhuman, however, gave him a kick with his foot. But because Kālananda was tough it did not bother him.

The monks heard what had occurred and they told the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, "Monks, a shroud (*ro'i gos* = *śavavastra*) should neither be too quickly taken or returned. Should it be taken, one must

remove it starting from the feet and working up to the head. But should one replace a shroud he should start from the head and work down to the feet. Monks, there are five bad things about shrouds. What are they? Their color is bad; they smell bad; they are old; they are full of lice; they are full of malicious *yakṣas*. Moreover, so long as it has no holes a shroud must not be taken by a rag-wearing monk (*pāṃśukūlika*)."

The Blessed One had said that a shroud without holes must not be taken, so the Group-of-Six took dogs to the cemetery with them. When those who were not believers saw this they verbally abused them saying "So you Venerable Ones setting off with dogs for the wilderness must be going hunting!" The Group-of-Six answered them. The Monks reported this matter to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said: "You should not go out taking dogs with you!"

They cut holes in the shrouds with sharp instruments then took them.

The Blessed One said: "Shrouds should not be taken after cutting them with sharp instruments! But only when small insects and ants have eaten them, then are they to be taken!"

They took them and wore them as they were.

The Blessed One said: "They should not be put on like that. Rather, they must be set out in an out of the way spot for seven or eight days. When they have been bleached out by the wind and sun, then, after being washed and dyed, they are to be worn!"

When they had put on such garments they entered the *vihāra* and worshiped the *stūpas*. The monks reported this matter to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, "I will designate the rules of customary behavior for a cemetery-dwelling monk: a cemetery-dwelling monk wearing a shroud must not go to a *vihāra*. He must not venerate a *stūpa* or, if he does, he must stay a fathom (*vyāma*) away from it. He must not use a cell (*layana*). He must not sit on seats and bedding. He must not sit among the community. When brahmins and householders have come and assembled he must not teach Dharma to them. He must not go to the houses of brahmins and householders. If he does he must stay at the door. If they say "Come in, Noble One!,' he must say 'I am a cemetery-dwelling monk.' However, if they say 'Noble One, if those like you who have taken up and entered into the ascetic practices (*dhūtaguṇa*) come into our house have we not obtained what is well obtained?,' then he should go in, but he must not sit on a seat. If they say 'Noble One, sit on this seat!' he should say 'I am a cemetery-dwelling monk.' However, if they then say 'Noble One, if those like you who have taken up and entered into the ascetic practices use our seats and house have we not obtained what is well obtained?,' then he should sit down there. In this there is no cause for remorse. But if a cemetery-dwelling monk who has taken up these rules of customary behavior as they were designated were not to enter into them, he would come to be guilty of an offence.

Like that of many of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* monastic texts dealing with *śmāśānika* monks, the structure of this text appears, at least at first sight, a bit disjointed and more than a little odd. The story of the monk Kālananda—like the "test" of the monk Mahākāla by the village boys—is narratively inconclusive: he takes the blanket, but cannot keep and wear it, and has to return it. The cloth ends up, in effect, where it belongs, and the story produces a ruling which seems to take as a given that all such cloth that is taken will potentially have to be returned. The whole procedure—the point seems to be—is an exercise in futility. But along the way the redactor took every possible opportunity to dump on monks who engage in this practice: the monk Kālananda does not just go to the cemetery to get the blanket, he "hurries" or "scurries" there—*myur ba myur bar* = *tvarita, śīghraṃ śīghraṃ*. This is exactly the same expression used to describe the action of Mahākāla in trying to beat the jackal to the food, and in both cases the intent was almost certainly to make such monks look ridiculous—"good" monks do not run at anytime. Our redactors also subtly but surely equate the monk Kālananda with the boy who became the hungry ghost—both are described in almost exactly the same terms, as excessively attached to the same blanket, and the parallel does not stop there. Both monk and hungry ghost behave in the same way. The redactors make a point of having Kālananda kick the *preta* when he is down, and the *preta*, then, kicking him back in the end. But perhaps the most obvious point to the tale—and it takes almost two thirds of the text—would seem to be that monks who take cemetery cloth bring foul and pernicious things (*pretas*), quite literally, to the monastery's door. This quite clearly was not wanted.[47]

Apart from the very brief and curious rules about stripping a corpse and dressing them again (!), the whole of the tale of Kālananda seems to function only as a preamble to an unfaltering description of the defects of shrouds, followed by a rule stating that they can only be taken when they are in really bad shape. The Group-of-Six then—in their characteristic way—insists on the rule while trying at the same time to get around it, forcing the rules that the redactors seem to be most interested in.

The final rules delivered by our text survive in Sanskrit in a very condensed form in, again, Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*. The first set of rules requires that any shroud that was actually to be worn—and note that in none of our texts have monks yet done this—must undergo a long process of transformation. It must be temporally and spatially dislocated from its source of origin, i.e., the cemetery, and allowed to remain for a relatively long time in a neutral, and probably neutralizing space—Guṇaprabha words this as *parivāsyābhyavakāśe vṛkṣādyupari*, "after leaving it out in the open on a

47 The specificity of the commands to be uttered, as well as the details of the procedure involved in the return of the cloth, leave the impression, at least, that we may have here something like an exorcistic rite for expelling unwanted "spirits" from the monastery.

tree, etc."[48] This, of course, in some ways shifts it from the category of *śmāśānika* to, or toward, the category of *pāṃśukūla*. But even when that has been done it must still be submitted to further transformative processes: it must be washed and dyed, i.e., rendered visually indistinguishable from any other kind of robe material. It must, in short, be well sanitized.

Oddly enough, and unlike the dyed and "proper" robes presented to the Bodhisattva by the god Vimalaprabha in the *Lalitavistara*, which appear to publicly cover up the shroud, the redactors of the *Vinaya* text go on to indicate that here dyeing is not meant to effect this, or that if it did, the monk himself is under obligation to counteract any such effect. Even when the shroud is washed and dyed the monk is under obligation to publicly declare what he is, and thereby what he is wearing—*pravedite smāśāniko 'ham ity*, in Guṇaprabha. They must do, in other words, what the Mānavadharmaśāstra says Cāṇḍālas must do—they must make their presence known to any they encounter. Although what exactly *cihnita* meant for Manu is not certain—"wearing distinguishing marks," "recognizable by distinctive marks," and although Fa-hsien reports in his day (399–413 CE) that when *Cāṇḍālas* entered into towns they had to "strike a piece of wood to announce their presence,"[49] the rules required by our redactors of Buddhist monks who wore shrouds would seem to go beyond even that: they had to verbally announce, individually and face to face, that they were, in effect, *Cāṇḍālas*. This could not have been comfortable for either party. The rules for such a monk in the larger social world—"outside"—in fact require that the announcement be repeatedly made. In a typically dharmaśāstric fashion—"you must not do x. But if you do . . ."—these rules require first that the monk "must not go to the houses of brahmins and householders," period. But if he does, he must stay outside—any further, more intimate contact must be by invitation (*upanimantrita*), and each phase must be preceded by another repetition of his character. What is most striking here in addition to the obvious and compulsory self-"cāṇḍālization" of the monk in any interaction with the laity is, perhaps, the tacit acknowledgment by the redactors that such monks might still be admitted into the homes of the laity and allowed to "use" their belongings. This is in stark contrast with the rules pertaining to monasteries. The *śmāśānika* monk is absolutely forbidden to go to a *vihāra* or to use anything that belongs to the monastic community[50]—here nothing is said about any invitation, and there are no contingency clauses whatsoever. Such monks, it appears, are more welcome in lay houses than in monasteries. This impression can only be reinforced by the fact that other provisions systematically disenfranchise the monk who wears the cloth of the dead, and even deny him access to objects of veneration: he cannot venerate the *stūpa*, or only do so at a specified distance; cannot have a room in the monastery, sit with other monks, or teach. The exclusion of this kind of Buddhist

[48] *Vinaya-sūtra* (Sankrityayana) 88.16–20 = *'dul ba'i mdo*, Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba Wu, 71b.2-.4.

[49] Shastri, *Manusmṛti*, X.55—the first rendering is Olivelle's, the second from Doniger and Smith, *The Laws of Manu*, 242. For Fa-hsien see Li Yung-hsi, *A Record of the Buddhist Countries* (Peking, 1957), 35.

[50] This is made explicit at *Vinaya-sūtra* (Sankrityayana) 88.19: *na sāṃghikaṃ ṁayanāsanaṃ paribhuñjita.*

monk from meaningful participation in his own monastic community is virtually complete.

What can be seen in these texts from the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya*—undoubtedly a major literary production of the period between empires—is, I would suggest, emblematic, or symptomatic, or representative of what much of mainstream Buddhist monasticism had become in this middle period. We see one group of Buddhist monks, the monks who redacted this *Vinaya* and were in a position to make the rules, who are concerned with or preoccupied with issues of social identity and the public image of the members of their community, trying to contain or marginalize another group or type of Buddhist monks, monks who were *śmāśānikas*. There are no good or apparent doctrinal reasons for objecting to *śmāśānika* monks, of course, and our redactors do not make even the slightest effort to provide any. What they are concerned with, and appear to want to avoid, as virtually all of the texts cited here would seem to make clear, are unfriendly and damaging accusations of cannibalism, theft, murder, association with foul *pretas* and, importantly, impurity. But while the specifics here are connected with monks who wear shrouds, the pattern of containment, distancing, and marginalization, and the overarching concern with public image that overrides the value of individual religious practice, are not. They appear as well, and as clearly, in this *Vinaya* in regard to other socially "dangerous" practices—dwelling alone in the forest, engaging in individual unsupervised meditation, etc. Indeed, monks who practice meditation alone in the forest are almost always presented as sexual deviants and trouble-makers that give the Order a bad name. But these monks cannot be considered here.[51] This same pattern, moreover, has also already been detected in regard to the monastic disposal of their dead and monastic inheritance law, and could easily be demonstrated in regard to a very broad range of other, seemingly more mundane matters like washing bowls and providing drinking water.[52]

But if—as seems certain—the *Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya* is a major literary product of the middle period, so too must obviously be the rules that it promulgated, the monasticism it was trying to construct, the tone it set toward ascetic practices, and the obsession with public image it betrays on almost every one of its very numerous pages. What emerges from this enormous compilation overall is the picture of a profoundly conservative, socially timid group intent on rocking no boats. This, moreover, is the Buddhism that succeeded in India, that built and ran Sāñci, the monasteries of Taxila and Pitalkhora. It did so, it seems, because it had learned how to write a loan contract and how to "properly" behave. Those monks who could not do the latter—while never formally disallowed—were by their own monastic rules effectively excluded from the very places that we study.

In concluding—or rather ending for the moment—one final point might be

[51] For some textual references, see n. 16 above, and G. Schopen, "The Good Monk and His Money in a Buddhist Monasticism of the 'Mahāyāna Period'," *Eastern Buddhist*, n.s. 32.1 (2000): 104 n. 34.

[52] For the first two, see n. 7 above; for the last two, *Kṣudrakavastu*, Derge Tha 226a.2–227a.3, and Tha 108a.6–110a.4.

considered. Given that the rules that have been cited here governing the behavior of monks who lived in cemeteries, and dressed in shrouds, present us with a representative snapshot of what monastic Buddhism had become, it might be of interest to at least ask about their chronological reach and influence. Their chronological reach or shelf life, it seems, was long. These rules were picked up and carried on by a wide range of medieval monastic handbooks like Guṇaprabha's *Vinaya*sūtra, Viśākhadeva's *Vinayakārikā*, and Viśeṣamitra's *Vinayasaṃgraha*.[53] At least the first two of these then continued to be copied—we have a surviving manuscript of the first that was copied at Vikramaśīla and has been dated to the eleventh or twelfth century, and several folios of the second of about the same period.[54] The question of the influence of such rules is, of course, more complicated. But that they may have cast a long shadow might well be indicated by an unlikely source.

It has already been noted that one thick strand of Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature openly and strongly advocates or extols the practice of the *dhūtaguṇas*. One such Mahāyāna *sūtra*—little studied now but cited by Śāntideva almost thirty times in his early medieval *Śikṣasamuccaya*[55]—is called the *Ratnamegha-sūtra*. Like all Mahāyāna *sūtras* its dating is difficult. The text could be late—it was first translated into Chinese only in the sixth century; it could also be relatively early—it is quoted three times in the *Sūtrasamuccaya* which might be by Nāgārjuna (second century?).[56] But early or late, the *Ratnamegha* is of particular interest here because it outlines in some detail how a bodhisattva should undertake the ascetic practices, one of which is, of course, the practice of a *śmāśānika*.

In treating the bodhisattva as *śmāśānika*, the *Ratnamegha* first indicates that wherever he is he must always and uninterruptedly fix in mind in regard to all men the idea of them dying, being devoured (by animals), being bloody corpses, discolored, putrefying corpses, etc. Then it says:

[53] For the *Vinayasūtra*, see n. 48 above; *Vinayakārikā*, Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba Shu 19a.2ff.; *Vinayasaṃgraha*, Derge, bstan 'gyur, 'dul ba Nu 111a.5; 145a.6ff.

[54] For the first, see the colophon in *Vinayasūtra* (Sankrityayana), 124; for the second, R. Sāṅkṛityāyana, "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 23 (1937), 23 and n. 1 (no. 195)—these folios remain unpublished.

[55] C. Bendall, *Çikshāsamuccaya. A Compendium of Buddhistic Teaching* (Bibliotheca Buddhica I) (St. Petersburg, 1897–1902), p. 370 s.v. *Ratnamegha*.

[56] P. Demiéville, H. Durt, A. Seidel, *Répertoire du canon bouddhique sino-japonais. édition de Taishō* (Paris/Tokyo, 1978), nos. 489, 658–660. On the still vexing question of the "author" of the *Sūtrasamuccaya* see, at least Bh. Pāsādika, "The Concept of Avipraṇāsa in Nāgārjuna," in *Recent Researches in Buddhist Studies. Essays in Honour of Professor Y. Karunadasa*, Bh. K. L. Dhammajoti, et al., eds., pp. 516–523 (Hong Kong, 1997), esp. the references in n. 5; and Pāsādika, "Tib J 380, A Dunhuang Manuscript Fragment of the Sūtrasamuccaya," in *Bauddhavidyāsudhākaraḥ. Studies in Honour of Heinz Bechert on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Indica et Tibetica 30), P. Kieffer-Pülz and J.-U. Hartmann, eds., pp. 483–494 (Swisttal-Odendorf, 1997). If it can be convincingly determined that the *Sūtrasamuccaya* is the work of Nāgārjuna, then much of the early "history" of Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature will have to be rethought.

> Son of good family, the bodhisattva who is a cemetery-dweller (*śmāśānika*) must develop thoughts of benevolence, he must be endowed with thoughts of benefit and compassion toward living things, morality and purity (*śuci*), and be unpolluted by meat. And what is the reason for that, son of good family? If a bodhisattva were to be seen eating meat in the vicinity of the cemetery there could be nonhuman beings (*amanuṣya*) who would give rise to a lack of faith and think to harm him.[57]

Although the spin here is clearly different, it is difficult not to recall here the story of Mahākāla and the rumors of cannibalism, in this case explicitly leading to a loss of faith (*aśraddha*) on the part of those who could be potentially beneficial. Here, too, the rule restricting what the *śmāśānika* can eat is even more closely tied to possible misunderstandings about cannibalism. But the text goes on:[58]

> Son of good family, the bodhisattva who is a cemetery-dweller, when entering a *vihāra*, venerating a *stūpa* of the Tathāgata, venerating the senior monks, or even being agreeable to the junior monks, must stand and remain so! He must not sit on seats and bedding belonging to the community! And why is that, son of good family? A bodhisattva must adapt to the mind of the world. Although the bodhisattva who is a cemetery-dweller does not adapt to the unnoble (*anārya*) world, he does adapt to the noble (*ārya*). If a bodhisattva who is a cemetery-dweller is invited to bedding and seats that belong to an individual he must, by all means feel no compunction, but when he has clearly determined that the other would not object, and he knows the intention of that monk, then he must sit before him on that seat with a lowly mind like a child of a Cāṇḍāla.

Here the echoes of rules like those found in our *Vinaya* are even stronger and their force clear. Even in a Mahāyāna text that advocates the cemetery ideal, and even when the *śmāśānika* is allowed into the *vihāra* and access to the *stūpa*, still he is left standing, denied use of the monastic community's goods, and therefore marked as an outsider. Our rules were clearly a force to be reckoned with and not easily got around. But a final irony, perhaps, is the fact that whereas our *Vinaya* rules only imply that the *śmāśānika* is to be identified with a *Cāṇḍāla*, the *Ratnamegha* requires that he actually think like one, and this, indeed, might give us cause for thought. Such rules, indeed, would have inflicted a heavy price on the individual, and the cost of the success of the Buddhist community that is so visible in the archeological and inscriptional record from the period between empires must almost certainly have been paid, in part, by the stigmatization, exclusion, and devaluation of such individuals by that same community—they became the new *Cāṇḍālas*.

[57] *'Phags pa dkon mchog sprin zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. Derge mdo Wa 89b.1. Śāntideva quotes a small part of this: *yady apy āryaratnameghe 'bhihitaṃ śmāśānikena nirāmiṣeṇa bhavitavyam iti*; Bendall, *Çikshāsamuccaya*, 135.1. The Ratnamegha devotes nearly five and a half folios to describing the bodhisattva's practice of the *dhūtaguṇas*.

[58] *'Phags pa dkon mchog sprin*, Derge mdo Wa 89b.3.

14

Recent Discoveries of Early Buddhist Manuscripts

And Their Implications for the History of Buddhist Texts and Canons

Richard Salomon

PROBLEMS IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BUDDHIST CANONICAL LITERATURE

Scholars of the history of Buddhism have long been troubled by the paucity of direct testimony from an early period for Buddhist canons and specific Buddhist texts. In the absence of old manuscripts for most of the various Buddhist regional and linguistic traditions, many scholars have legitimately felt compelled to doubt, or at least question, the originality and historical accuracy of the redacted, standardized, and formalized versions of the texts of the *Tripiṭaka* (as Buddhist canons are conventionally, if somewhat imprecisely labeled) as they are known from living Buddhist traditions in the Pāli, Tibetan, and Chinese canons. Specifically, scholars have worried about the question of whether the texts that have survived in later traditions, for the most part in the form of relatively modern manuscript or printed forms, represent more or less accurately the literature of earlier periods of Buddhism before the formation of such standardized canons, or whether they rather have undergone substantial, even radical alterations from the hypothetical "original" texts.

In earlier phases of the modern study of the history of Buddhism, and to some extent still nowadays, this issue has been discussed primarily with reference to the Pāli canon, since that was for many years the only Buddhist literature available in an Indian language, and is still the only one that has survived in the form of a complete canon. Whereas scholars of earlier generation tended to emphasize the antiquity and textual integrity of the modern Pāli canon,[1] more recent and contemporary experts have been inclined to focus on structural discrepancies both within the Pāli canon and between it and the other canons, and to emphasize the uncertainties about the shape, contents, and textual status of the Pāli canon before, and to some extent even after it was redacted in a

1 For example, Rhys Davids (1890: xxxix) says with reference to the "Questions of King Milinda," a paracanonical but old text, "the Pāli Piṭakas were known, in their entirety, and very nearly, if not quite, as we now have them, to our author."

definitive form embodied in the commentaries of Buddhaghosa and others, around the fifth century CE.[2]

The question of the original forms—or more precisely, the earliest recoverable forms—of Buddhist texts and literatures or canons was both illuminated and vastly complicated by the discovery, beginning in the later part of the nineteenth century, of large numbers of Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, first in the form of relatively late manuscripts from Nepal, and then, around the beginning of the twentieth century, in the form of considerably older manuscripts from "Chinese Central Asia" (that is, the modern Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region of China) and the Gilgit region of northern Pakistan. The Central Asian and Gilgit manuscripts in particular contained many non-Mahāyāna texts belonging to the Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda schools which corresponded, in varying degrees, to texts of the Pāli canon, especially to those of the *sutta/sūtra-piṭaka*. To some extent the work of editing this Sanskrit literature and evaluating its relation to the Pāli and other non-Mahāyāna Buddhist literatures is still in progress,[3] but it is already clear that these discoveries, rather than enabling us to reconstruct, even in the broadest outlines, some archetypal form of the Buddhist *sūtras* and other genres, have instead opened our eyes to the vast volume and range of variation that Buddhist literature comprises, even in what we can provisionally identify as its earliest strata.

Much the same can be said regarding the Buddhist literatures and canons which were translated into non-Indian languages. Particularly relevant to the classes of literature under consideration here is the vast body of Chinese translations, some of which go back as far as the second century CE. Here again, the Chinese translations overlap extensively with the Pāli and Sanskrit canons, but do not allow one to reconstruct clear and simple lines of development or relationships. When one compares, for example, the Chinese versions of the major non-Mahāyāna *sūtra* collections (that is, the *Dīrgha-*, *Madhyama-*, *Ekottarikā-*, and *Saṃyukta-āgamas*)[4] one finds, on the one hand, a considerable degree of agreement between them and the corresponding Sanskrit and Pāli collections, but also significant differences in the contents, arrangement, and location of a great many of the *sūtras*. Depending on one's preconceptions and point of view, one may emphasize the broad correspondences over vast ranges of time and space and understand them to show the overall unity of the Buddhist *sūtra* literature, even to the point of assuming that they ultimately derive from a single archetypal collection; or, one can stress the extensive discrepancies in contents and arrangement and take this as an indication of the fundamental diversity of

2 For examples of studies which raise such questions, see Weller 1928 and Schopen 1985: especially part 2, pp. 9–14.

3 For a comprehensive, though no longer completely up-to-date survey of the literature embodied in the Central Asian Sanskrit manuscripts, see Sander 1979.

4 Here as a matter of convenience and convention I use the Sanskrit names for these collections. The corresponding Pāli terms, which may be more familiar to some readers, are respectively the *Dīgha-*, *Majjhima-*, *Aṅguttara-*, and *Saṃyutta-nikāyas*. The corresponding Chinese names are *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經, *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經, *Zengyi ahan jing* 增壹阿含經, and *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經.

the different Buddhist traditions, suggesting that they cannot be traced to any unitary source.

One major reason for these disagreements is that the actual documentary sources, that is, the manuscripts, and in a few cases inscriptions, that until recently have been available nearly all date from a time well after the formative period of Buddhist literature—whenever exactly that might have been. Theoretically, this formative period would go back to the lifetime of the Buddha—whenever *that* might have been—since most Buddhist canonical texts ought to be, by definition, the actual words of the Buddha. But since it is agreed both by Buddhist traditions and by modern scholars that the *sūtras* and other early Buddhist "scriptures" were preserved only in oral form for some centuries after the Buddha's lifetime, there is no hope of ever discovering actual documents showing the "original" forms of the texts. Moreover, most if not all modern scholars have also given up any hope of reconstructing such an original canon by means of comparing the earliest surviving versions of the texts. There are various technical and methodological reasons why this comparative method is apparently doomed to failure,[5] but the essential problem is that, by the time of the earliest available testimonia, Buddhist tradition had already differentiated into several, perhaps many regional divisions with significantly diverging texts and doctrines, no one of which can legitimately be privileged as the "oldest" or "most authentic." Specifically, the old-fashioned notion that the Pāli canon represents the "most original" form of Buddhism and of Buddhist literature is now wholly and rightly discredited in academic circles, if not in the popular conception.[6]

What I have outlined above describes the state of affairs that prevailed until only a few years ago, that is, before large numbers of fragmentary manuscripts of Buddhist texts from the northwestern fringe of the Indian subcontinent (modern eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan), written in the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script, began to come to light and be published.[7] As a result of these discoveries, everything—and yet, nothing—has changed. We now have what Buddhist scholars had, until recently, hardly dared to dream of: dozens of substantial pieces and hundreds of smaller fragments of manuscripts from an unprecedentedly early and formative period of Buddhist literature in northern India, namely the first to third centuries CE, a level of antiquity from which we have previously had almost[8] no manuscript sources. But I hasten to add that we should not expect these new discoveries to provide

5 See, for example, the comments in Schopen 1985: 14–22.

6 We should be careful, however, to avoid overreacting to the traditional privileging of the Pāli versions of Buddhist *sūtras* and other texts. For example, MacQueen (1988: 166–167) has provided some cogent arguments for the position that, in certain cases, the Pāli texts may in fact be more reliable and authentic than those preserved in other languages.

7 For major publications to date on these texts, see Allon 2001, Lenz 2003, and Salomon 1998a, 1999, 2000, 2003. Other relevant publications are listed in the references at the end of this chapter.

8 The major exceptions are the Khotan Gāndhārī manuscript of the *Dharmapada* (Brough 1962), and a handful of early Sanskrit manuscripts among the Central Asian finds which appear to date as far back as the second century (Sander 1991). These are discussed further on pp. 353 and 356.

miraculous answers to all of our questions and solutions to all of our problems. Quite to the contrary, it is clear (more precisely, I should say, it has become clear to me in retrospect) that such new discoveries inevitably raise more questions than they answer, at least in the short term. We should not expect to find simple, direct, and consistent patterns of linkages or lines of descent between the Buddhist literature of Gandhāra and the hitherto better known bodies of Buddhist literatures, and, as will be shown below, for the most part we have not yet found them. Naturally, the overall picture should gradually become clearer in the course of the further study of the Gandhāran manuscripts, which is after all still in its early stages, but it is now clear to me that we should not expect to discover direct linear relationships that apply to the corpus as a whole.

In fact, it is more likely that the closer we look, the more complicated the relationships will become. Experience in various fields of intellectual endeavor teaches us that when we know fact A and fact B but do not understand the relationship between them, we are prone to imagine that we can find a fact C which will neatly explain what is missing. That is to say, we will search for a "missing link" to explain the gaps in our knowledge; but the missing link usually turns out to be a will-o'-the-wisp. What actually happens, more often than not, is that when we do find fact C, it not only fails to neatly explain the relationship between fact A and fact B, but also cannot be linked directly to either A or B. So, instead of one answer to one question, we are left with three questions and no answers; and the happy delusion that our "missing link" will set up a nice neat line for which we only have to connect the dots is rudely shattered.

One can draw an analogy here, for example, to the study of the evolution of Homo sapiens. When paleontologists had only a few fragments of fossil bones to work with, they tended to conceive human evolution as a simple line or ladder for which only one, or a few "missing links" were needed to fill out the complete picture. But as more and older pieces of evidence have gradually turned up, they have provided not missing links, but rather a bewildering variety of side-branches or dead ends, so that "a tangled bush has now replaced a tree as the ascendant imagery of human evolution."[9] Similarly, as more of the Gandhāran manuscripts are discovered, studied, and published, we should expect the picture to become correspondingly more, not less, complex. For, as we all must come to discover eventually, one way or the other, "The more you know, the less you know"; that is to say, the more information we accumulate and the more understanding of it we achieve, the more we become aware of the limitations and insufficiency of our that information and understanding.

But this is not say that nothing will be gained from the new discoveries. On the contrary, in the long run, we surely will learn a great deal from them, and although they may not answer our old questions, they may well show us that we have been asking the wrong questions, and thus enable us to ask other, better questions—and perhaps even, eventually, to answer them. At this early stage of the study, it is still quite difficult to see exactly what those questions, let alone their answers, will be; but, for whatever they may turn out to be worth, some preliminary possibilities are offered here.

[9] John Noble Wilford, "Redrawing Humanity's Family Tree," *New York Times*, August 6, 2002, p. D-2.

OVERVIEW OF RECENTLY DISCOVERED BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPTS AND COLLECTIONS

Gāndhārī / Kharoṣṭhī Manuscripts

Most of the recently discovered groups of manuscripts in Gāndhārī have been described in some detail in previous publications such as those referred to in note 7, so that here only a summary and update of the information will be presented. This corpus consists for the most part of scrolls made of birch bark, although some of the later fragments are on palm leaves. All of the manuscripts in question are written in the one or another of the varieties of the Gāndhārī language,[10] that is, the Middle Indo-Aryan vernacular of the northwestern portion of the Indian subcontinent, and in the Kharoṣṭhī script,[11] an Indian adaptation of Achaemenian Aramaic which, unlike all other Indic scripts, was written from right to left. Although the circumstances and location of their discoveries are not well documented, it is fairly certain that most of them come from Buddhist sites in eastern Afghanistan, probably in or around Haḍḍa and Bamiyan.

Until the recent discoveries, only one manuscript in Gāndhārī had been available to scholars, namely, the birch-bark scroll containing a Gāndhārī version of the *Dharmapada* (Brough 1962) discovered at Kohmāri Mazār near Khotan in Xinjiang in 1893. Thus for many years, it had been uncertain whether this manuscript was a unique or rare anomaly, or whether it was rather the sole survivor of a larger literature. While the latter alternative was cautiously supported by several authorities,[12] it was confirmed by the acquisition in 1994 by the British Library of a diverse group of twenty-nine fragments of scrolls of a similar type, containing a wide variety of Buddhist texts written in many different hands. Not long afterward, two other large collections of Gāndhārī Buddhist manuscript fragments, namely, the Senior and Schøyen collections, have come to light, as well as a several other smaller groups.[13]

The two largest groups of Gandhāran manuscripts, namely, the British Library and Senior collections, were both found in clay pots which apparently had been interred on the grounds of Buddhist monasteries. There is some uncertainty as to the motivation for the burial of the manuscripts. They may have constituted a ritual interment for worn out old manuscripts, or they have served as an accompaniment to funeral ceremonies for deceased monks. The evidence for either theory is less than conclusive (Salomon 1999: 81–84; Lenz 2003: 109–110; Salomon 2003: 78–79), and both may be in some respects correct. However this may be, in both of these cases the pots in which the manuscripts were found contained dedicatory inscriptions which provided important clues for determining their historical and cultural contexts. The

[10] For a summary of the main varieties of literary Gāndhārī, see Salomon 2002.

[11] For detailed analysis of the varieties of Kharoṣṭhī script found in the new manuscripts, see the chapters on paleography by Andrew S. Glass in Salomon 2000, Allon 2001, and Lenz 2003.

[12] For instance Lamotte (1988: 570), who commented with regard to the possibility of Buddhist texts in Gāndhārī that "[w]e are justified . . . in believing that a certain number of originals have disappeared."

[13] For details of these collections, see the appendix ("Summary of the Main Collections of Kharoṣṭhī/Gāndhārī Manuscripts") to this chapter.

inscription on the pot containing the Senior scrolls is dated in the year 12 of an era which, though unspecified, can be securely attributed to the era of Kaniṣka (Salomon 2003: 76–77). This allows us to date the manuscripts in this pot to some time in or around the first half of the second century CE.

The inscription on the pot in which the British Library scrolls were found is not dated, but some of the manuscripts themselves contain references to previously known historical figures of the first half of the first century CE, suggesting a date in or not much later than that time (Salomon 1999: 141–151). A general range of dates for these and the other Gandhāran manuscripts is further corroborated by comparisons of their script and language to those of Gandhāran inscriptions of known date, and such comparisons confirm that most of them were written in the first and second centuries, although some of the later examples, such as those in the Schøyen and Bibliothèque Nationale groups, may date from the third century.

Although the inscription on the British Library pot is undated, it does provide important information on another level. It refers to the owners of the pot as *dhamaüteaṇa*, that is, members of the Dharmaguptaka school of Buddhism. This implies that at least some of the manuscripts in the pot represent texts belonging to that school, and this assumption is corroborated by textual evidence of at least one of them.[14] Unfortunately, there is little that can be said as yet about the sectarian affiliations of the other Gandhāran manuscripts in the absence of any similar clues, but it may be hoped that their affiliations may be clarified in the course of detailed textual studies in the future.

The condition of the various manuscripts varies widely. A few of the smaller scrolls in the Senior collection are complete or nearly so, but the most of the manuscripts in this collection, and virtually all of the ones in the other collections, are more or less fragmentary. While some of the larger fragments in the British Library and Senior collections constitute substantial portions of the original scrolls, many others are much more fragmentary. This is particularly the case with the Kharoṣṭhī fragments in the Schøyen collection, which are mostly small scraps from a variety of different manuscripts.

Overall, the Gandhāran manuscripts present us with a wide and diverse sampling of different varieties of Buddhist literature in Gāndhārī, both in terms of content and of format. This variety applies both to the differences between the various groups of manuscripts, and also, in most cases, within the groups themselves. For example, the British Library collection is characterized by a great diversity of genres, formats, styles, and scribal hands, while the Senior collection consists mostly of *sūtra* texts, all or nearly all of which were written by the same scribe. The Schøyen fragments resemble the British Library manuscripts in that they represent a diverse group of texts of various genres, but differ from them as well as from the Senior group in their format, which is that of *poṭhī* style manuscripts on palm leaf, rather than birch-bark scrolls.

[14] This is the version of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra*, discussed p. 361, which is closely similar to the version of that text in the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* version, generally believed to be a Dharmaguptaka collection (Salomon 1999: 166–175). Although Boucher (2000: 66–68) has offered some well-chosen words of caution about this attribution, it still seems to be the most likely theory.

This feature may be characteristic of a later stage of development of the Gandhāran manuscript tradition.

Among the several textual genres represented in the various Gāndhārī manuscript collections, the most prominent one is, not surprisingly, *sūtra*. The Senior collection consists mostly if not entirely of *sūtra* texts. The British Library collection includes substantial fragments of the **Khargaviṣāṇa-sutra* or "Rhinoceros *Sūtra*" (Salomon 2000), the *Saṅgīti-sūtra* (Salomon 1999: 171–174), and a collection of *sūtras* of the *Ekottarikā/Aṅguttara* type (Allon 2001). The Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī fragments also contain at least two well known *sūtras*, namely, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (Allon and Salomon 2000) and the *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra* (not yet published). The latter is the only example discovered so far of an unequivocally Mahāyāna text in Gāndhārī, but it is possible that other Mahāyāna texts, not yet identified, may be included among the Schøyen fragments.

Abhidharma and similar scholastic texts and commentaries are also well represented in the British Library collection (Salomon 1999: 26–30). The University of Washington manuscript (see the appendix, no. 7) as well as several of the fragments in the Schøyen group apparently also belong to this category. *Avadānas* and *pūrvayogas*, that is, stories about previous births and the effects of *karma*, are a prominent category among the British Library scrolls (Allon 2001: 303–306; Lenz 2003: part II); and although texts of these genres have not yet been positively identified in any of the other Gandhāran manuscripts, at least one of the Bibliothèque Nationale fragments seems to belong to a similar category (Salomon 1998a: 137).

Also represented among the several collections are various classes of verse texts, including two manuscripts of the *Dharmapada*, one in the British Library (Lenz 2003: part I) and the other in the Khotan manuscript (Brough 1962), two manuscripts of the *Anavatapta-gāthā*, one each in the British Library and Senior collections (Salomon 1999: 31–33, 138–139; Salomon 2003: 79–83; Salomon in progress), and a single *stotra* in the British Library collection (Salomon 1999: 39). There appear to be some other specimens of these or similar genres among the Schøyen fragments, but these have not yet been positively identified. Conspicuously, and probably not coincidentally absent from all of the collections are *vinaya* texts (Salomon 1999: 163–164).

It must be emphasized that the majority of the texts in the various collections remain unidentified, whether because they have no parallels in any other Buddhist literature, or because the researchers engaged in their study have not yet succeeded in locating such parallels. In many cases, especially in the Schøyen collection, the problem of identification is aggravated by the very fragmentary character of the manuscripts; indeed, to date only two of Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī texts, namely, the abovementioned *Mahāparinirvāṇa*- and *Bhadrakalpika-sūtras*, have been specifically identified. In general, the problems of identification are particularly acute among with the scholastic and *abhidharma* texts. But this is hardly surprising, since this category tends to be most variable among the various known Buddhist literatures and canons, and the Gandhāran scholastic literature probably consisted largely if not entirely of local texts which are not represented in other Buddhist literatures.

Other Recent Discoveries of Buddhist Manuscripts

Besides the Gāndhārī manuscripts described above, many other important Buddhist manuscripts in Sanskrit and in local derivatives of Brāhmī script from Afghanistan and the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent have come to light within the last few years. Although these Sanskrit manuscripts are not as old as the Gāndhārī ones, they are nonetheless of great importance for the history of Buddhist literature. Moreover, they have a direct bearing on the Gāndhārī texts that are the main subject of this chapter, in that they represent later stages of the same Buddhist tradition of "Greater Gandhāra," that is, the Gandhāra region itself (roughly equivalent to the Peshawar valley of modern Pakistan) plus the adjoining parts of modern Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and China (Xinjiang) that came under Gandhāra's cultural influence, and where, as a result, Gāndhārī was the dominant literary language in the early centuries of the Christian era (Salomon 1999: 3).

A particularly important example of this second class of recent manuscript discoveries is a very substantial portion of a complete text of the *Dīrghāgama* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda (or Sarvāstivāda) school (Hartmann 2000, 2002), which is similar in format and script to the manuscripts discovered near Gilgit in 1931 and which probably comes from the same region. Various other manuscripts of *vinaya* and *sūtra* texts, probably from the same region and period, namely, about the sixth or seventh century CE, have also come to light recently, although none of these have been published yet.

A vast collection of Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts which were originally found at or near Bamiyan, Afghanistan, is now part of the collection of Martin Schøyen of Spikkestad, Norway. This collection comprises several thousand fragments of a vast variety of texts and genres, ranging in date from approximately the second or third to the seventh centuries. The great majority of them are in Sanskrit or Buddhist Sanskrit written in varieties of Brāhmī script, but the collection also includes many small fragments in Kharoṣṭhī and Gāndhārī, which have already been mentioned above. Many of the Schøyen manuscripts have already been published by various scholars in Braarvig 2000 and 2002.

BUDDHIST TEXTS IN GĀNDHĀRĪ AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER BUDDHIST LITERATURES

Evidence for Early Local Manuscript Traditions in Buddhist India

Despite many remaining uncertainties as to the specific identification and sometimes even as to the genre of many of the newly discovered Gandhāran manuscripts, the corpus as a whole does tell us a great deal that we did not know before about Buddhism and Buddhist literature in Gandhāra. Above all, we are now sure that there was a flourishing Buddhist manuscript culture in Greater Gandhāra using the Gāndhārī language and its constant companion, the Kharoṣṭhī script, in the early centuries of the Christian era, which produced large numbers of manuscripts of a vast variety of texts and genres. We can safely assume that the many fragments that we now have are still only a tiny fraction of what must have once existed. Indeed, it is known that several, perhaps many, other Gandhāran manuscripts besides the ones discussed here have been found in over the last two centuries, although most of them have apparently been lost or destroyed (Salomon 1999: 59–68).

The approximate but fairly firm dates that can be attributed to the surviving Gandhāran manuscripts—that is, from the first to the third centuries of the Christian era—shows that the period in which they were written was not long after the time at which, according to the Theravādin tradition of Sri Lanka, Buddhist texts were first set down in writing, namely, in the later part of the first century BCE.[15] Although the historical accuracy of this traditional date and its applicability to other Buddhist regions and traditions are open to question, it is nonetheless reasonable to assume that the Gandhāran manuscripts do represent an early stage, if not the earliest stage, of the recording of Buddhist literature in writing. What went before this, in Gandhāra and elsewhere, we do not know and probably will never know, unless by some lucky chance even earlier manuscripts were to turn up in Gandhāra or other parts of the Indian world; but this is very unlikely to happen.

Given the indirect testimony from Theravādin traditions on the one hand and the actual manuscript evidence from Gandhāra on the other, the question arises as to whether the extensive production of Buddhist manuscripts in Gandhāra during the early centuries of the Christian era was a peculiarity of the cultural history of that region, or whether it was rather a local manifestation of a broader pattern that appeared elsewhere in, perhaps even throughout, the Indian Buddhist world. Indeed, it is probably not a mere accident of geography, archaeology, or history that such manuscripts have been found only in Gandhāra. It may be that Gandhāran manuscripts alone have survived because Gandhāran Buddhists had a practice of ritually burying their manuscripts; or, perhaps more likely, Buddhist manuscripts survived in the far northwest, Afghanistan, and Central Asia because these regions fall outside the range of the monsoon climate which is so damaging to perishable manuscript materials such as birch bark and palm leaf.[16] Especially in view of the Sri Lankan references to the beginning of the written tradition in the first century BCE, it is not hard to imagine that similar Buddhist manuscript cultures were flourishing in the early CE period in India proper as well as in Gandhāra, writing texts in local varieties of Brāhmī script and in Middle Indo-Aryan dialects and/or Sanskrit.

Indeed, we do have a few actual relics of non-Gandhāran manuscript traditions from north India that may be contemporary with or at least not much later than the early Gāndhārī manuscripts (see note 8). A particularly interesting case is the single fragment of a birch-bark scroll with a text in Brāhmī and Sanskrit that was found together with the Kharoṣṭhī/Gāndhārī scrolls in the British Library collection.[17] Since

15 For opinions as to the exact date of this event, see, for example, Lamotte 1988: 368-369 and Schopen 1985: 9.

16 It is presumably for this reason that not only the manuscripts under discussion in this chapter, but also nearly all of the other oldest surviving Indic manuscripts have been found in these regions, rather than in the Indian heartland itself.

17 In Salomon 1999: 23, 39, 46, etc. this fragment was incorrectly described as containing a medical text. Subsequent research (not yet published) by Stefan Baums of

this scroll, like the Gāndhārī scrolls it was found with, was written on birch bark, it must also have come from some place in the far northern or northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent, but it is clearly set off from the others not only by its language and script but also by its unusual format (Salomon 1999: 88, 94). We can therefore assume that it was imported from some other adjoining region, and this shows not only that Buddhist texts were being set down in writing in other parts of the Buddhist world at the time in question but also that manuscripts circulated among the different regions. In other words, the Gandhāran Buddhist manuscript culture must not have developed in a vacuum, but rather contemporaneously and in contact with literatures in other regions.

The evidence of the Schøyen collection of manuscripts from Bamiyan points in the same direction. The oldest fragments in that collection, which seem to date from about the late second or early third centuries CE, include manuscripts in both Gāndhārī and Sanskrit. This situation may reflect a transitional period during which the Kharoṣṭhī script and Gāndhārī language were being gradually being replaced in Greater Gandhāra by Brāhmī and Sanskrit, but this process itself implies interactions between different local and regional literary traditions.

Finally, the presence among the Buddhist manuscripts found in Xinjiang of a small but significant number of early manuscripts which may be contemporary with or only slightly younger than the Gandhāran manuscripts (Sander 1991: 133–135) points in the same direction. These manuscripts were probably brought to Central Asia from India, and although the exact region where they were originally written cannot be determined, their variety of Brāhmī script shows that they must have come from somewhere in north India, but not from Gandhāra or adjoining regions where Kharoṣṭhī was predominant. Thus they constitute further evidence that the Gandhāran manuscript tradition was not a unique local phenomenon.

All of the materials mentioned above come from northern or, especially, northwestern India. It is easy to imagine, though impossible to prove, that at the time in question similar traditions were active in other parts of India as well, such as the Deccan and the far south. Given the highly developed monastic institutions (for example, at Amarāvatī) that are known from archaeological and epigraphic evidence to have existed in southern India at this period, it is reasonable to suppose that manuscripts were being produced in large numbers there too, as in the north. That we have no actual specimens of any south Indian manuscripts from anything remotely approaching this level of antiquity can be readily explained by the climate of these regions, in which fragile writing materials rarely last more than a few centuries.

Some Comparisons of Gāndhārī Texts with their Parallels in Other Recensions

Thus it can be concluded that the Gandhāran manuscript tradition was probably one of several, perhaps many, local written literatures in Buddhist India of the early centuries

the University of Washington has shown that it is rather a Buddhist text in which the human body and its parts are compared to a city.

of the Christian era, and that the relative abundance of its surviving remains is probably due to the more favorable climate of the far northwest rather than to any qualitative difference in the Gandhāran manuscript tradition itself. It remains, then, to see what can be determined about its historical and textual relationships to the other contemporary Buddhist literatures, or rather (in most cases) to their surviving descendants as known from later manuscript traditions. The volume of texts in Gāndhārī that is now available to scholars, and in particular the still small but steadily growing number of Gāndhārī texts that have been studied and published in detail, makes it possible to approach these questions in a meaningful though still preliminary way. Particularly useful in this regard are those texts for which one or more parallels exist in other Buddhist languages, several cases of which will be discussed below.

One example is the Gāndhārī version of the "*Rhinoceros Sūtra*" (**Khargaviṣaṇa-sūtra*), which was the first of the new Gandhāran manuscripts to be published in full (Salomon 2000). Parallel texts for this *sūtra* are available in Pāli (in the *Suttanipāta*, *Apadāna*, and *Culla-niddesa*) and in Sanskrit in the form of an abridged version incorporated into the *Mahāvastu* (Salomon 2000: 5–6). A detailed comparison of the three versions of this *sūtra* (Salomon 2000: 38–52) revealed that in terms of overall structure the Gāndhārī version was more similar to the Pāli text, but in respect to the specific wording of the verses it had more in common with Sanskrit. This suggests a complex relationship among these three, probably involving several or many other lost versions of the *sūtra*, so that none of the three extant texts can be convincingly identified as being closer to a hypothetical original than the other two. In other words, the situation is comparable to that which John Brough discerned with regard to the Khotan *Dharmapada* and its parallels in Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan, namely, that there is "no evidence whatsoever that any one of these has any superior claim to represent a 'primitive Dharmapada' more faithfully than the others" (Brough 1962: 27; cited in Salomon 2000: 48).

The recent publication (Lenz 2003) of a second fragment of a manuscript from the British Library collection of the *Dharmapada* in Gāndhārī makes it possible, for the first time, to compare two versions of the same text within the Gandhāran tradition. Not surprisingly, the editor of the new text found it to be "very closely related" to the Khotan *Dharmapada* text, "most likely being a second version of essentially the same text" (Lenz 2003: 13). Although the new *Dharmapada* fragment contains only twelve incomplete verses from the end of the *Bhikṣu-varga*, Lenz succeeded in demonstrating that it is closely similar in contents and ordering to the corresponding portion of the Khotan Gāndhārī *Dharmapada*, and that this common Gāndhārī recension differs fundamentally from all of the other *Dharmapada* collections in Pāli, Sanskrit, and other languages (Lenz 2003: 14–19). This is an important finding, in that, on the one hand, it suggests that the Gāndhārī literary tradition was at least somewhat consistent and unified, while on the other hand, it confirms that the Gandhāran versions of common Buddhist texts differed significantly from those of other traditions, as was also the case with the Rhinoceros *Sūtra*.

The correspondences between the British Library and Khotan versions of the *Dharmapada* in Gāndhārī are all the more striking in that they come from two very distant locations, at the opposite ends of Greater Gandhāra. The British Library manuscripts were probably found in or near Haḍḍa in eastern Afghanistan (Salomon

1999: 68), whereas the Khotan *Dharmapada* was reported to have been discovered near Khotan in modern Xinjiang (Salomon 1999: 58–59). Although it is still not clear whether the Khotan Dharmapada was written in Central Asia or rather imported thence from somewhere in the Indian subcontinent (Salomon 1999: 120, 129–130), in either case the close textual similarities between these two manuscripts suggests an overall consistency in the Gandhāran Buddhist literary tradition.[18]

Returning to the question of the relationships between Gāndhārī texts and their parallels in other Buddhist literatures, the prose *sūtras* in the British Library and especially in the Senior collection provide ground for interesting comparisons. One important group of *sūtras* from the former collection, a scroll containing three *sūtras* arranged on numerical principles as in the Pāli *Aṅguttara-nikāya* and the Sanskrit/Chinese *Ekottarikāgama*, has already been studied in detail (Allon 2001). Of these three *sūtras*, two have clear and fairly close parallels in Pāli and Chinese, whereas the third has no direct correspondent in any other Buddhist canon, although partial parallels for portions of it were located by the editor (Allon 2001: 224–243). This appears, on the basis of the studies that have been carried out to date, to be a typical pattern in the Gandhāran *sūtra* literature, in which *sūtras* which have clear parallels in one or (usually) more other Buddhist canons are mingled with others for which, apparently, no parallels exist. This pattern is particularly prominent in the Senior collection, which consists mostly of *sūtra* texts. For example, scroll number 5 of the Senior collection[19] contains four short *sūtras*, of which three have direct parallels in Pāli and Chinese, while the other one apparently has no parallels. Thus, to judge from the studies of these materials to date—which, it must be noted, involve only a fraction of the whole corpus that is now known—it would appear that the corpus of *sūtras* which was current in Gandhāra was broadly similar to those of other Buddhist canons, but also contained a good deal of material that was peculiar to the local tradition.

As to the relationships between the individual *sūtras* in the British Library *Ekottarikāgama* fragment and their parallels in other languages, Allon's detailed study (Allon 2001: 26–40) led to a conclusion similar to that reached in connection with the Rhinoceros *Sūtra*. Citing comments in Salomon 2000: 38 to the effect that the relationships of the various versions of the *Rhinoceros Sētra are* "quite complex" and "do not divide into clear and neat groupings," Allon (2001: 26) comments that "this statement is equally true for the relationship between the G[āndhārī], P[ali], and S[ans]k[ri]t versions of the Dhoṇa and Prasaṇa-sutras"[20] of the Gāndhārī *Ekottarikāgama* fragment. He goes on to point out (Allon 2001) that "[T]he G text, for example, parallels the P version with reference to some features but differs from the P

[18] Unfortunately this is the only case that has been discovered so far in which the same portion of text is occurs in two different collections or groups of Gāndhārī manuscripts. As noted above, p. 355, both the British Library and Senior collection contain fragments of the *Anavatapta-gāthā*, but the portions of the text preserved in the two fragments do not overlap. It is still possible, however, that detailed studies of these fragments of the *Anavatapta* (to be presented in Salomon, in progress) will provide some clues as to their textual relationship.

[19] This manuscript is currently being prepared for publication by Andrew Glass.

[20] These are the two of the three *sūtras* which have direct parallels in other languages.

version and parallels the Chinese or Skt., or both, with reference to others. Differences are discernible on virtually all levels: the course of events and information given, details of diction, and, to a lesser extent, grammar." Allon's detailed study of the diction of the Gāndhārī *sūtras* (Allon 2001: 30–37) led him to the similar conclusion that "they represent an independent textual tradition" (Allon 2001: 36).

Thus in the case of all three Gandhāran texts in the British Library collection[21] which have been studied in detail so far and for which parallels are available in at least two other Buddhist traditions, the relationships among the parallel texts are quite complex. No special relationship can be established between the Gāndhārī version of the texts concerned, namely, the *Rhinoceros Sūtra*, the *Dharmapada*, and the *Ekottarikāgama sūtras*, and any one of the other versions in Pāli, Sanskrit, and/or Chinese. In each case, the Gāndhārī version has both similarities to and differences from each of the other versions, and no one of the parallels can be specified as more closely related overall to the Gāndhārī. In other words, the relationships among the various versions of each text are intertwining rather than linear; a bush, not a ladder.

However, this is not the whole story. There are also at least three other cases in which special relationships *can* be demonstrated, or at least posited, between Gandhāran versions of *sūtra* texts and particular versions of the corresponding *sūtras* in other traditions. The first such case is the large fragment (not yet published) among the British Library scrolls of a commentary on the *Saṅgīti-sūtra*. In this case, as discussed in detail by Salomon (1999: 171–173), a preliminary survey of the topics of discussion and their order in the Gāndhārī text shows them to be very similar to those of the version of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra* found in the Chinese *Dīrghāgama*, while those of the other extant versions of the text in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Chinese are very different. This parallel between the Gāndhārī and Chinese versions of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra* is likely to be related to the sectarian affiliation of the British Library scrolls, which, for reasons explained above, are likely to be texts of the Dharmaguptaka school. Since the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* is also believed, by most scholars at least, to be a Dharmaguptaka collection (see note 14), the resemblance between the Gāndhārī *Saṅgīti-sūtra* and the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* versions of the same sūtra is likely to be historically and textually significant, rather than merely fortuitous.

The second case in which a special relationship can be postulated between a Gāndhārī *sūtra* and another version of the same *sūtra* involves scroll number 2 of the Senior collection, which contains the opening portion of the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra/Sāmaññaphala-sutta*. This is a particularly interesting and promising case, since the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* is an important text which has already been the subject of two

[21] Some preliminary comments on the textual affiliation of one of the *Saṃyuktāgama*-type *sūtras* in the Senior collection are presented in Salomon 2003: 89–90. Although the small sample of text presented there (which is the only part of the Senior collection that has been edited and published so far) is closer to the Chinese than to the Pāli parallel, it is concluded that "it would be highly premature to draw from this single observation any conclusions about the textual and sectarian affiliations among the three versions of the sūtra in question. . . . [P]revious experience in analogous situations should lead us to expect that the relationships among the extant versions of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya/Saṃyuktāgama* . . . will turn out to be very complex."

detailed textual studies (Meisig 1987 and MacQueen 1988), whose findings will now have to be reexamined in light of the new Gāndhārī fragment as well as of the new Sanskrit version of the *sūtra* in the recently discovered *Dīrghāgama* manuscript mentioned above (p. 356). According to a preliminary and as yet unpublished survey by Mark Allon (Allon 2002), the newly discovered Gāndhārī version of the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* "on the level of structure of the narrative (i.e. course of events) . . . is closest to the Chin. DĀ version." Thus here too, as in the case of the British Library *Saṅgīti-sūtra* commentary, the Gāndhārī text of the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* seems be more closely related to the corresponding text in the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* than to the several other versions of it which are extant in Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan. Although the apparent special relationship between the Gāndhārī and the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* versions of the *Śrāmaṇyaphala* is less clear-cut than was the case with the *Saṅgīti*, Allon tentatively concludes that "although research is at an early stage, it appears that this G[āndhārī] Ś[rāmaṇya]ph[ala-]S[ūtra] is closely related to the version in the Chin. DĀ, at least based on what survives of the G text."

In the case of the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra*, the apparent connection between the Gāndhārī and the Chinese *Dīrghāgama* versions is based entirely on textual correspondences. Unlike the case of the British Library *Saṅgīti-sūtra* commentary, where we have inscriptional evidence indicating a Dharmaguptaka connection for the text, there is no external clue as to the sectarian affiliation of the Senior manuscripts. Of course, it is possible that the Senior manuscripts are also Dharmaguptaka texts, especially in light of the prominence of that school in Gandhāra in the period in question (Salomon 1999: 175–178). But as yet we have no positive evidence of this, other than the tentative *Śrāmaṇyaphala* connection.

The third case of a possible linkage between a Gāndhārī manuscript and another Buddhist tradition yet again involves the Chinese *Dīrghāgama*. Regarding the Gāndhārī fragments of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* (*MPS*) in the Schøyen collection, its editors found this text to be "a version distinct from the other MPS texts which survive in Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan. Although in various points . . . it coincides with one or the other of them, it does not agree completely with any other version. Moreover, it contains at least two significant elements which . . . are not present in any of them" (Allon and Salomon 2000: 271). But it was also noted that it "does appear in some respects, though by no means consistently, to resemble the Chinese Dīrghāgama versions of the MPS more than any other single version" (Allon and Salomon 2000: 272). Although this conclusion is less secure than in the cases of the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* and especially of the *Saṅgīti-sūtra*, we do begin to see an intriguing pattern in which Gāndhārī *sūtras* from each of the three major manuscript groups (British Library, Senior, and Schøyen) seem to have a particular relationship with parallel versions of the Chinese *Dīrghāgama*. Since the latter is probably (though not definitely) a Dharmaguptaka text, this convergence may indicate a sectarian connection, though this is far from certain at this point. Thus it remains to be seen whether studies of other Gāndhārī *sūtras*, as well as of texts of other genres, will continue to support this apparently special relationship with the Chinese *Dīrghāgama*.

The fragments of the *Anavatapta-gāthā* found in both the British Library and Senior collections provide a potentially fruitful ground for textual comparisons. Neither of these fragments has been published yet, but a preliminary study of the

British Library fragment[22] of this text (Salomon, in progress) shows complex relationships with the several other extant versions. These other versions include not only a text of the *Anavatapta-gāthā* incorporated into the *Bhaiṣajyavastu* of the *vinaya* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin* school which is preserved in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese versions, but also independent texts in the form of small fragments of a Sanskrit manuscript from Turfan (published in Bechert 1961) and a separate Chinese translation by Dharmarakṣa (T no. 199, 佛五百弟子自說本起經 *Fo wubai dizi zishuo benqi zing*). The relationships of the new Gāndhārī texts to the various versions are not only complex but also somewhat surprising. For example, one might have expected to find a closer relationship between the Gāndhārī version and the translation of Dharmarakṣa, not only because it is a relatively early translation (303 CE, according to Bagchi 1927: 103), but also because Dharmarakṣa's translations show numerous indications of being based, directly or indirectly, on Gāndhārī prototypes (Boucher 1998: 476–481). However, the preliminary comparisons that have been carried out to date have not supported any such connection. Although there are some instances in which the British Library Gāndhārī text of the *Anavatapta* does agree with Dharmarakṣa's Chinese as against all the other versions, these cases are by no means numerous enough to indicate a special relationship between the two, and there are, moreover, many counter-examples.

One striking example of this point involves the first three verses of the chapter containing the recitation of the disciple Vāgīśa (in Gāndhārī, *Bakia*). In all of the previously known versions except that of Dharmarakṣa, the first verse of this chapter is curiously out of place, whereas in Dharmarakṣa's translation this verse is in third position, which seems to be its proper position in the narrative. But here the new Gāndhārī texts agrees with all of the other versions in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese in having the anomalous ordering of the first three verses of the chapter, rather than with the preferable and presumably more original position of Dharmarakṣa's text. Thus this is one of several points which suggest that the British Library Gāndhārī *Anavatapta-gāthā* does not have a direct linear affiliation with the Dharmarakṣa translation, or rather, with its Indian archetype.

Although its affiliations with other versions of the *Anavatapta-gāthā* are uncertain, it is clear from any number of examples that the Gāndhārī *Anavatapta* is an essentially independent text. It has many anomalous readings and structural peculiarities that set it off from the other versions, taken both individually and as a whole; that is to say, there are many more differences between the Gāndhārī *Anavatapta* and the other versions than there are among those other versions. For example, at several points the Gāndhārī text has an extra verse which is absent in all the other versions, or conversely, lacks a verse which in present in all the others. Another notable peculiarity of the Gāndhārī text is the ordering of the individual chapters, each of which consists of a recitation by one of the Buddha's foremost disciples of his own karmic history. Whereas in the previously known versions the number and order of these recitations is generally stable, though not always completely identical, the ordering in the surviving portions of the Gāndhārī text is apparently quite different.

22 The smaller fragment of the *Anavatapta-gāthā* in the Senior collection has not yet been examined in terms of textual affiliations, and hence is not discussed here.

For instance, in the Gāndhārī the recitation of Nanda is the first one in the surviving portion of the text, probably the fourth or fifth in text as a whole,[23] whereas in all the other versions it is the twenty-sixth chapter. The six other surviving chapters of the Gāndhārī text are also out of order in comparison to the other versions, though less drastically so. Overall, the anomalies in the arrangement of the seven surviving chapters of the Gāndhārī *Anavatapta* confirm its independent character vis-à-vis the other versions.

In terms of specific readings, the closest parallels to the Gāndhārī version seem to occur not in Dharmarakṣa's text, as might have been expected, but rather in the apparently independent Sanskrit version of which a few fragments have been found among the Turfan manuscripts. For example, the first quarter of the sixth verse of Vāgīśa's recitation reads in the Gāndhārī text *taśpa preaṇamaṇeṇa*, "Therefore, by one who understands . . ." Here the corresponding verse in the Sanskrit version in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*, attested in a Gilgit manuscript, reads *tasmāt prajānatā samyak* (Wille 1990: 85, verse 91), but the Turfan Sanskrit fragment has *(*ta)smāt prajānamānena* (Bechert 1961: 107, verse 11). Evidently the Turfan version has preserved the more archaic *ātmanepada* (or rather, pseudo-*ātmanepada*) form of the present participle, based on a Gāndhārī or other Middle Indo-Aryan original, while the Gilgit version has transformed it into the more classical *parasmaipada* form *prajānatā* (adding after it the word *samyak* to make up the metrical deficit caused by the shorter form of the word). As far as can be seen from the small number of cases where the surviving portion of the Gāndhārī text overlaps with the meager Turfan fragments, this is a typical case. Although the Turfan fragments are too few to permit an comparison of the overall structure of the text to the Gāndhārī and other versions of the *Anavatapta*, their readings do tend to be closer to those of the Gāndhārī than to the other extant Sanskrit version, namely, the Gilgit *Vinaya* text.

Thus in the case of the *Anavatapta-gāthā*, as in several of the other Gāndhārī texts discussed above, we find a complex relationship, but one in which some meaningful patterns can be discerned. The significance of the special resemblance between the Gāndhārī and the Central Asian Sanskrit version remains to be clarified, pending the detailed study of the British Library fragment as well as of the Senior text of the *Anavatapta-gāthā* (see note 22), but the *Anavatapta*, like the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* discussed above, holds out the promise of yielding particularly interesting results because of the several parallel versions that are available for comparison.

GĀNDHĀRĪ TEXTS AND THE STANDARDIZATION OF BUDDHIST LITERATURE

Whereas most of the Gandhāran manuscripts now known are evidently separate individual texts, in a few cases, most notably in the Senior collection, we have what seem to be portions of organized textual collections. In such cases, the question arises

[23] The exact number of Nanda's recitation is not known because the beginning of the text in the upper part of the scroll is lost, but it comes immediately before that of Śroṇa Koṭiviṃśa, which is the fifth in the other versions, so it is probably one of the early chapters.

as to whether these collections represent parts of a complete canon. Of course, we can rule out at the very outset the possibility that the Senior collection constitutes anything like a canon in the stricter sense of the term, that is, a comprehensive, organized, and standardized body of authoritative scriptures defined by a religious or secular authority. The Senior scrolls comprise a selection of a few dozen *sūtra* texts, several of which have parallels in the Pāli, Sanskrit, and Chinese *Saṃyutta-nikāya/Saṃyuktāgama* collections, but they cannot be, in and of themselves, a *Saṃyuktāgama*, or even a portion thereof. For one thing, the Senior collection is far too small to constitute even one segment of a complete *Saṃyuktāgama*, and for another, it includes, besides the several *Saṃyukta*-type *sūtras*, at least two other texts, namely, the *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* and *Anavatapta-gāthā*, which in view of their length and contents are hardly likely to be part of a *Saṃyukta* collection. Thus it is more likely that the Senior collection represents some sort of anthology or personal collection (Glass 2002: 21), perhaps analogous to those represented in Aśoka's Calcutta-Bairat edict (see, e.g., Schopen 1985: 12) or in the early Chinese translations of small sets of *Ekottarikā*- and *Saṃyukta*-type *sūtras* (as discussed in Harrison 1997 and 2002).

But there are also certain features of the Senior collection which can be taken to imply the existence at its time of a complete Gandhāran *Saṃyuktāgama*—though not necessarily in written form. For, as shown in Glass 2002: 24–25, when the identified *Saṃyukta sūtras* in the Senior collections are collated with their Pāli and Chinese parallels, some curious patterns appear, as revealed in tables 14.1 and 14.2 (adapted from Glass 2002: 24).

It is not likely to be a coincidence that the *sūtras* in the complete Pāli and Chinese collections which correspond to the *sūtras* in the Senior group fall into fairly clearly defined groups within those very large collections, which contain thousands of *sūtras*. Thus the Pāli parallels to the Senior sūtras that have been identified to date all occur in only three of the five *Vaggas* or major divisions of the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, and, more strikingly, in only four of its fifty-six *saṃyuttas* or secondary divisions. It is also noteworthy that the four *saṃyuttas* in question are all either the first (*Khanda*, *Saḷāyatana*) or last (*Sotāpatti*, *Sacca*) within their respective *Vaggas*, suggesting that they may have held a privileged position therein.

Equally striking is the clustering of the individual *sūtras* corresponding to the Senior *sūtras* in nearby positions in the Pāli and Chinese collections, as for example in the case of the first three Senior *sūtras* in table14.1 above, corresponding to *sutta* numbers 22.30, 22.33, and 22.37 of the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, and the first two *sūtras* in table 14.2, corresponding to *sūtras* 47 and 49 of the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*. There are even cases where the parallels to the Senior *sūtras* occupy immediately adjacent positions in the parallel collections, as in the second and third to last *sūtras* in table 14.2, corresponding to *sūtras* no. 1165 and 1166 in the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*.

TABLE 14.1: PĀLI *SAṂYUTTANIKĀYA* (*SN*) PARALLELS IN THE SENIOR SCROLLS

Sutta *Number in* Saṃyutta-nikāya *(pages in Pāli Text Society ed.)*	Vagga* *in* *SN*	Saṃyutta *in* *SN*	Vagga* *in SN*	*Number of Corresponding Senior Fragment*
22.30 (3.31–32)	*Khandha*	*Khandha*	*Bhāra*	22.3
22.33 (3.33–34)	*Khandha*	*Khandha*	*Natumhāka*	5.2
22.37 (3.37–38)	*Khandha*	*Khandha*	*Natumhāka*	22.1
22.84 (3.106–109)	*Khandha*	*Khandha*	*Thera*	17
22.101 (3.152–155)	*Khandha*	*Khandha*	*Puppha*	5.4
22.146 (3.179)	*Khandha*	*Khandha*	*Kukkuḷa*	5.3
35.127 (4.110–113)	*Saḷāyatana*	*Saḷāyatana*	*Gahapati*	≈5.1
35.195 (4.171–172)	*Saḷāyatana*	*Saḷāyatana*	*Samudda*	≈20.1
35.200 (4.179–181)	*Saḷāyatana*	*Saḷāyatana*	*Āsīvisa*	19
35.204 (4.191–195)	*Saḷāyatana*	*Saḷāyatana*	*Āsīvisa*	≈20.1
55.7 (5.352–356)	*Mahā*	*Sotāpatti*	*Veḷudvāra*	13
56.43 (5.450–452)	*Mahā*	*Sacca*	*Papāta*	20.2
56.48 (5.456–457)	*Mahā*	*Sacca*	*Papāta*	22.2

* The term *vagga* is used in two ways in the arrangement of the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, designating both the five major divisions of the collection as a whole and the smaller subdivisions of the *saṃyuttas*, which in turn are subsets of the major *Vaggas*. In other words, the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* is divided into successively smaller sections called *Vagga*, *saṃyutta*, *vagga*, and *sutta*. In these tables, the major class is listed under the heading *Vagga*, the smaller grouping under *vagga*.

TABLE 14.2: CHINESE *SAṂYUKTĀGAMA* (雜阿含經; (T. vol. 2, no. 99) PARALLELS IN THE SENIOR SCROLLS

Sūtra *Number in* Saṃyuktāgama *(page reference in Taishō vol. 2)*	*Number of Corresponding Senior Fragment*
47 (12a9–17)	5.3
49 (12a27–b9)	22.1
78 (20a3–9)	22.3
263 (67a22–c3)	5.4
269 (70b1–c1)	5.2
271 (71a4–c13)	17
406 (108c6–20)	22.2
422 (111b10–24)	20.2
1044 (273b9–c7)	13
1165 (311a3–b25)	≈5.1
1166 (311b26–c8)	≈20.1
1174 (314c7–315b6)	19

These patterns suggest that the *Saṃyukta*-type *sūtras* incorporated in the Senior collection were not chosen at random, but rather reflect some sort of underlying linkages or cohesion, linkages which are also reflected, though separately, in both the Pāli and Chinese *Saṃyukta* collections. Thus different pairs of Senior *sūtras* have different sort of linkages with the two complete collections. For example, the parallels to Senior *sūtras* 22.3 and 5.2 are closely linked in the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, where they correspond to *suttas* 22.30 and 22.33, respectively, but their parallels are not linked in the Chinese text, where they are *sūtras* 78 and 269, respectively. Conversely, the parallels to Senior *sūtras* 5.3 and 22.1 are linked in the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*, where they are *sūtras* 47 and 49, respectively, but are not linked in the Pāli, where they are *suttas* 22.146 and 22.37.

These complex relationships must mean that the Gāndhārī *Saṃyukta sūtras* in

the Senior collection were selected from or at least somehow related to a larger pre-existing collection[24] whose principles of arrangement and specific groupings had features in common with, but were not the same as those of both the Pāli *Saṃyutta-nikāya* and the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama*. The relationship of this hypothetical Gāndhārī *Saṃyuktāgama* to the two other collections would have been similar to the relation of the those two collections to each other; that is to say, they embody a common fund of textual material and organizational principles, but differ considerably in the specifics of their contents and arrangement. Thus on the level of large collections, as was also the case on the level of individual texts, we find complex interrelationships among the different versions, rather than linear connections in which one version or the other can be characterized as more original.

The positing of a hypothetical Gāndhārī *Saṃyuktāgama* is not meant to imply that such a collection had been recorded in writing in full by the time in question, that is, around the second century CE. To the contrary, the old and new evidence that is available to us rather suggests that comprehensive *sūtra* collections of this type were still being preserved and passed on primarily in oral form, that is, by the *bhāṇaka* system of recitation and memorization. Written texts seem to have been preferred (presumably by habit and custom rather than by law) for certain texts and genres. Among *sūtras*, manuscripts seem to have been used for particular texts of special importance or popularity, such as the Rhinoceros *Sūtra* and the *Saṅgīti-sūtra*, and for anthologies such as the ones discussed above. There is no evidence of any effort to compile written versions of complete *āgamas*,[25] although such massive compilations probably existed in the memories of the *bhāṇakas*. Perhaps the technological and material limitations of manuscript preparation at this relatively early period made the preparation of the massive amounts of writing material that would have been required an impractical matter; or perhaps rather no need was felt for such an effort, since references to less common or important texts would be ready at hand, in the form of the memories of the *bhāṇakas* themselves.

24 In the discussion of this paper during the "Between the Empires" conference (April 12, 2003), Gregory Schopen questioned the assumption that the Senior *sūtras* represent a distillation of a larger collection, suggesting that, to the contrary, they could be the original kernel of what subsequently was expanded into a long collection, and that these texts might reflect "the very beginnings of the Buddhist canon." This alternative explanation cannot be disproved, but I consider it to be less likely, among other reasons because it goes against everything that the Buddhist traditions lead us to believe about the history of their canons. While scholars should and must question the traditions they study and take nothing for granted, it seems to me excessively skeptical to doubt that the *sūtra* collections existed at all in the second century CE. Moreover, the evidence of Aśoka's Calcutta-Bairat inscription, referred to above, shows that a concept of *sūtra* anthologies at least partially similar to that embodied in Senior collection existed as early as the third century BCE.

25 The British Library fragment of a group of *Ekottarikāgama*-like *sūtras* could be part of a complete *Ekottarikāgama* manuscript, in which case this statement would be incorrect. But it is more likely to be part of some sort of selection or anthology, perhaps somewhat like the one which is embodied by the Senior collection; see the detailed, though inconclusive discussion of this issue in Allon 2001: 22–25.

This, of course, raises the issue of the purpose and function of the Gandhāran manuscripts. While they may have served practical functions, for instance as materials for pedagogy or reference, they may also have served simultaneously, or even primarily, as ritual objects. Indeed, there is reason to think that the Senior manuscripts were prepared specifically for the purpose of being ritually interred, perhaps together with the bodily remains of a monk. Among other indications of this is the fact that at least some of the Senior scrolls were apparently in perfect condition when they were buried (Salomon 2003: 78); this, in contrast to the situation with the British Library scrolls, which have been explained as a collection of old and damaged manuscripts that were accorded a ceremonial burial (Salomon 1999: 81–84).

Another peculiarity of the Gandhāran manuscripts which suggests that they had a primarily ritual function is the fact that in every case in which a scroll can be identified as containing only a part of a longer text, that scroll contains the beginning of the text in question. This pattern can be observed in both the British Library and the Senior collection. In the former group, the *Anavatapta-gāthā* scroll would have been the first scroll of a set of, probably, three scrolls in all, if that the entire text was ever actually written out. We can make this assumption because (as discussed on p. 363) most of the seven recitations that are preserved on the scroll are ones which come near the beginning of the text as a whole in the several complete versions of the *Anavatapta* preserved in other languages. The situation is similar in the case of the British Library *Dharmapada* fragment, which was written by the same scribe as the *Anavatapta* scroll. Here the arrangement of the more complete Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* scroll from Khotan indicates that the verses preserved on the British Library scroll are from the end of the second chapter of the text. Since the Gāndhārī version of the *Dharmapada* probably had twenty-six chapters in all, arranged in decreasing order of size, the British Library fragment of it would have been the first of a series of, probably, six scrolls, if the text had been written out in full.

In the Senior collection, the same pattern holds for the two scrolls that contain portions of longer texts. The *Śrāmaṇyaphala-sūtra* scroll has only the opening narrative frame of the *sūtra*, coming to an end when King Ajātaśatru arrives at the Buddha's residence in Jīvaka's mango grove, while the Senior *Anavatapta-gāthā* scroll has the introductory portion and the recitation of the first disciple, Mahākāśyapa. Thus in all four cases in which we would have expected to find multivolume manuscripts of longer texts, we actually have only the first scroll and no trace of all of the later ones. This seems to push the boundaries of coincidence and raise the question of whether the texts in question ever actually were written out in full, or whether, instead, only the first scroll was actually written, serving as a symbolic representation of the entire text which was felt to be sufficient for ritual purposes.[26] If this explanation is correct, it

26 For this theory I am indebted to Mark Allon, who proposed it in private communication (and who also provided several other helpful comments on this paper). It is interesting to note that in other Buddhist manuscript traditions, too, the earlier portions of large collections seem to appear much more frequently than the later sections. Several such examples are to be found among the data collected in Allon 2001:10; for example, the fragmentary Gilgit text of the *Ekottarikāgama* "consists of sections of the *nipātas* on the ones and twos" (ibid.), and the section on ones also seems

suggests that the early Buddhist manuscript traditions may have been ritual and symbolic as well as—perhaps even rather than—practical.

Another feature of the Gandhāran manuscripts which suggests that they do not represent parts of a complete written canon is their unstandardized and somewhat casual character. In terms of both physical format as well as textual contents, the early Gāndhārī texts are highly diverse. For example, both the height and width of the scrolls varies widely, not only within the disparate British Library group (Salomon 1999: 87–91) but even within the more unified Senior group. This is hardly suggestive of the sort of organized mass production that would be necessary to create a written edition of a complete Buddhist canon or a portion thereof, which would have involved a huge amount of text. Here we can contrast, for example, Gilgit-type manuscripts such as the *Vinayavastu* and the newly discovered *Dīrghāgama* manuscripts, which are very long and have a uniform format. The same is true, broadly speaking, of the bulk of the Turfan manuscripts, which tend to follow a generally, though not rigidly, standardized format.

With regard to language, orthography, and script, too, the early Gandhāran manuscripts exhibit a lack of standardization that sometimes seems to border on chaos. Once again, this is true not only for the British Library collection with its wide variety of handwritings, spelling practices, and linguistic registers (see for example Salomon 1999: 130–132), but also for the more uniform Senior collection. Even though the latter group is the work of a single scribe, one finds in it a bewildering assortment of more or less random spelling variations. For example, in the second *sūtra* on Senior scroll no. 5 we find the following spellings[27] for the same word, equivalent to Pāli *pajahatha* / Sanskrit *prajahīta* "abandon!": *pacajahaṣa, pajaaṣa, pacaeṣa, pacahaṣa, pracaeṣa*, and *pacahaṣa*. Thus within the space of six lines the scribe writes the same word six times with five different spellings. Referring to a similar situation in the Khotan *Dharmapada* manuscript where the Gāndhārī equivalent of Pāli *seyyo* / Sanskrit *śreyaḥ* "better" is spelled four different ways in four adjacent verses, Brough (1962: 270) commented that "the scribe has amused himself by giving different spellings for the one word: *ṣevha, ṣehu, ṣeho*, and *ṣebha*." This explanation may be correct for Brough's *Dharmapada* text, but there is clearly no such conscious intention on the part of the scribe of the Senior manuscript. Rather, he seems to alternate these spellings randomly and unconsciously. Variations such as *pajaaṣa* and *pacaeṣa* show

to predominate among the Turfan fragments of the *Ekottarikāgama*. Thus the practice of writing out the beginning of long compilations as symbolic substitutes for the whole may not have been restricted to the Gandhāran tradition.

In the discussion of this paper during the "Between the Empires" conference, Madhav Deshpande pointed out an analogous practice in modern Brahmanical ritual: during the annual ceremony of putting on a new sacred thread, brahmins "recite the beginnings of all Vedic and non-Vedic texts."

27 These spellings are based on preliminary readings, some of which may need to be corrected in the final edition being prepared by Andrew Glass.

that the Senior scribe had difficulty distinguishing etymological *c* and *j*,[28] even to the extent that, in *pacajahaṣa*, instead of choosing the one or the other, he wrote both!

This kind of variation stands in sharp contrast with the relatively standard Sanskrit of later Buddhist manuscripts such as those from Gilgit and Central Asia. While it is true that the language of these and other Buddhist Sanskrit (as opposed to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit) manuscripts is somewhat informal and occasionally inconsistent, and while it is also true that these peculiarities are often suppressed or minimized in published editions, there is nevertheless a fundamental qualitative difference between the character of the language of the early Gandhāran manuscripts and that of later Buddhist Sanskrit texts. The Gāndhārī of the British Library and Senior scrolls shows no trace of regularization by an educational authority or adherence to a recognized standard. So in respect to their language, as also with their physical format and textual contents, the early Gandhāran texts give the impression of belonging to an early stage of the development of a written canon.

The discussion to this point has focused mainly on the Gāndhārī manuscripts in the British Library and Senior collections, in part because these are the largest and best-studied sets of early Gandhāran manuscripts. By way of comparison and contrast, I would now like to add a few words about the Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī fragments. These are more difficult to analyze, partly because the collection has not bet been studied as carefully as the Senior and especially the British Library scrolls, but mainly because of their extremely fragmentary condition. Although nearly all of the texts in the British Library and Senior collections are fragmentary, most of these fragments consist of continuous sections of texts, sometimes quite long and in a few cases even nearly complete. This is because they are parts of scroll manuscripts in which the entire text or at least a large section of it was contained on a single continuous strip of bark. The Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī fragments, in contrast, come from palm-leaf manuscripts in the traditional Indian *poṭhī* format, with separate folios which were tied together with a string and could easily become disordered and separated. It is presumably because of this format that the surviving Schøyen fragments consists of many small pieces representing discontinuous portions of several different original manuscripts. This situation makes the identification and location of the fragments very difficult, and is at least part of the reason that only two texts have been positively identified so far.

Despite these difficulties, the Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī fragments do provide some useful clues about issues of standardization and canonicity. For example, comparisons with complete versions of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* in other languages show that the Schøyen *Mahāparinirvāṇa* fragments are scattered over various parts of the text, including some from fairly near its beginning and end. This means that they are fragments of a complete manuscript of this exceptionally long *sūtra*, so that there can be no question here of an abridged symbolic manuscript of the sort that seem to be present among the Senior and Schøyen collections.

Another indication that the Schøyen fragments represent longer and more comprehensive texts or collections than those in the British Library and Senior collections is the presence among them of high folio numbers. For example, Schøyen

28 There are many other examples of this phenomenon in the Senior scrolls, for example *acali* as the equivalent of Pāli *añjaliṃ* (Salomon 2003: 86–87).

fragment 2179/1 has a folio number written vertically along the right margin, the surviving part of which reads */// 100-20-20-20-20-10*, that is, *190*. The portion of the manuscript which precedes the figure for *100* is broken away, but at its very edge there appears to be a remnant of another character. According to the rules for writing numerals in Kharoṣṭhī script,[29] this would have to have been a *2* or some other larger number, constituting a multiplier of the following *100*. Therefore this fragment belongs to a manuscript which had at least 190 folios, and possibly many more than that.

Other large folio numbers among the Schøyen fragments include 105 (fragment 88), 70 or possibly a higher number such as 90 or 170 (fragment 49), and 63 (fragment 33). Also among the Hirayama fragments, which are actually part of the same group as the Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī fragments (see the appendix, no. 6), we find in fragment 1 the folio number 160. Although little is known as yet about the nature of the texts contained in these fragments, they definitely indicate that at least some of the Schøyen/Hirayama fragments belonged to very long manuscripts which must have contained one or more complete texts.

In terms of language and orthography, too, the Schøyen/Hirayama group of Kharoṣṭhī fragments differs from the manuscripts in the British Library and Schøyen collections. Many of them have a strongly sanskritized orthography, and this, along with paleographic features that are also indicative of a relatively late date, is the main criterion according to which they are assigned a later date than the other Gāndhārī manuscripts, on the grounds that such sanskritization typically appears in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions only from the time of Kaniṣka onwards, that is, during and after the second century CE (Allon and Salomon 2000: 106; Salomon 2002: 128). The morphology of the Schøyen fragments also seems to be considerably more regular than that of the earlier Gāndhārī manuscripts; for example, in the Schøyen *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, "[t]he nominative singular masculine ending is regularly *-o*. . . . This contrasts with the typical situation in Gāndhārī inscriptions and especially manuscripts, which frequently show more or less random variation in the nominative singular between two or more endings. . . . [T]he situation in the MPS-G . . . presents a more formal and apparently semi-standardized variety of Gāndhārī" (Allon and Salomon 2000: 269).

Thus when we compare the three largest collections of Gāndhārī manuscripts, we find some signs of a general progression from a more casual and unstandardized language and format among the two older ones, namely, the British Library and Senior groups, to a somewhat more standardized and organized character in the Schøyen group. However, the chronological gap between the three collections as a whole is apparently not very large. The British Library collection, which is almost certainly the oldest of the three, can, for reasons mentioned discussed on p. 363, be dated as early as the first half of the first century CE, while the Senior scrolls can be attributed to a time before or in the early part of the reign of Kaniṣka. Unlike these two collections, for which epigraphical or internal evidence provide useful indications of their dates, the Schøyen Kharoṣṭhī fragments can only be dated on the grounds of comparisons of their linguistic and paleographic characteristics with those of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of

29 For details of this, see Salomon 1998b: 64.

known date, and these point to a date during or after the time of Kaniṣka.[30] Thus the evidence of the new manuscripts, tenuous as it may be, suggests a movement in Gandhāra during or around the reign of Kaniṣka toward a more formalized, comprehensive, and standardized body of written Buddhist scriptures; that is to say, something more like a written canon in the strict sense of the term.

It is interesting to recall in this context the well-known account, reported by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang in the early seventh century CE, of the council convened by Kaniṣka in Kashmir, in the course of which the *Tripiṭaka* was standardized, commented upon, and set down in written form. According to this account Kaniṣka invited members of the Buddhist *saṅgha* to preach the law to him every day, but "found the different views of the schools so contradictory that he was filled with doubt, and he had no way to get rid of his uncertainty" (Beal 1884: 151). He therefore convened a group of 499 *arhats* who composed authoritative commentaries on the *sūtra-*, *vinaya-* and *abhidharma-piṭakas*, which he then had "engraved on sheets of red copper" (*chitong wei ye* 赤銅為鍱), "enclosed . . . in a stone receptacle" (*shihan* 石函), and placed inside a *stūpa* (ibid., 156). Although the historicity and accuracy of this account, which was apparently provided to Xuanzang as hearsay evidence some five centuries after the fact, are open to question, the outlines of the story have at least a sort of a priori plausibility, in that they accord with the typical circumstances under which standardized Buddhist (and other) canons are known to have been developed in other times and places, both in India and in other parts of Asia for which our historical knowledge is more complete and reliable.

First of all, Xuanzang's account of Kaniṣka's council is consistent with a well-attested pattern according to which formal written canons tended to be developed under the auspices and sponsorship of kings in situations where different sects or institutions were vying for royal support and legitimation.[31] The king's confusion and, we may suspect, annoyance with "the different views of the schools" which the various Buddhist teachers expounded to him seems to reflect, on the one hand, an authoritarian bureaucrat's impatience with a messy and unstandardized body of laws, and on the other, a crafty politician's sense of the benefits to be obtained by establishing control and authority over the preeminent religious institutions in his territories.

Second, the reference in Xuanzang's report to the composition of commentaries accords with another attested pattern, namely, that the drawing up of definitive commentaries is typically associated with the establishment and standardization of canons, as for example in the case of the Theravādin Pāli canon. And finally, Xuanzang's description of the recording of the texts on copper plates and their

30 By an interesting coincidence, the earliest Kharoṣṭhī inscription with distinctly sanskritized features is the Sue Vihar inscription (see Salomon 2001: 241 for details), which is dated in the eleventh year of Kaniṣka—one year before the date of the inscription on the pot which contained the Senior scrolls.

31 For examples of discussions of this pattern, see Collins (1990) and Mayer (1996: 6-21). Although both of these treatments focus particularly on the issue of the establishment of closed versus open canons, which is not exactly the point at issue here, they are nonetheless relevant to more general questions of canonization and standardization in Buddhism.

interment in a stone container within a *stūpa* is consistent with the archeological record of the time and region in question. Although these plates have never been found and probably never will be (if, indeed, they ever actually existed), inscribed sheets of copper and other metals such as silver or gold placed inside stone receptacles, exactly as described by Xuanzang, have often been found among the relics in Gandhāran *stūpas*. Although such metal sheets typically bear dedicatory inscriptions rather than canonical texts or commentaries, these inscriptions often contain citations from or references to such texts.[32] Moreover, the many discoveries, both recent and older (Salomon 1999: 58–68), of Buddhist manuscripts interred in *stūpas* reflects essentially the same practice, though involving different materials.

I must emphasize that I am not proposing a simplistic model according to which Kaniṣka single-handedly established the, or rather, a Buddhist canon in the second century CE, thereby rendering a vast, locally variable, and still largely oral literature into a standard written form. Even if the legend of Kaniṣka's council has a historical basis, or at least is based on some kernel of historical truth, the entire process of the canonization and setting down in writing of Buddhist literature must have been far more complex and gradual than this single report makes it seem. Nevertheless, in broad outline the legend does provide a model that fits the archaeological and textual evidence quite well, and the historical and linguistic contexts, as far as we understand them, of the recently discovered Gāndhārī manuscripts suggest that it was precisely in and around the time of Kaniṣka that Buddhist texts were being increasingly set down in writing.

Looking, then, at the overall development of Buddhist canonical literature in the first few centuries of the Christian era, we see a movement from an earlier stage in which texts were preserved and transmitted primarily in oral form toward one in which written texts, whether serving practical or ritual purposes, or both, became increasingly widespread, though they probably never entirely supplanted the oral versions. In this transitional period, manuscripts were apparently used primarily for certain classes of texts such as individual *sūtras* or small *sūtra* anthologies and technical and scholastic texts, but not for other types of texts, notably *vinaya* texts, which at this point were presumably still preserved only in oral form and passed on through communal recitation (Salomon 1999: 163–165; Sander 1991: 142). By the time of the Kharoṣṭhī documents from the Schøyen collection, which most likely date from the later Kushana period, that is, around the late second or early third centuries CE, we begin to see some indications, though as yet tantalizingly meager, of the development of more comprehensive written corpora. Some four or five centuries later, when we have large corpora of Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts among the Gilgit and Turfan manuscripts, we find what complete manuscripts with more or less standardized contents, containing large sections of the canons such as the *Dīrghāgama* or the *Vinayavastu*.

Thus we can tentatively conclude that during the period between about the first and seventh centuries CE the Buddhist literary tradition of north India gradually shifted from one that was primarily oral to one in which written texts played a prominent, though not exclusive role. The textual, historical, and archaeological information now available to us suggests that this shift took place, or at least began, during the time of the Saka and especially the Kushana kingdoms in the first few centuries CE. While the legend of Kaniṣka's council of Kashmir as reported by Xuanzang makes it seem as if the standardization and setting down in writing of the Buddhist canon was achieved single-handedly by him, the truth is no doubt much more complex than that. It is not difficult to imagine that other foreign kings who preceded or followed Kaniṣka in the northwest, as well as their indigenous contemporaries in other parts of India (about whom we know much less), might have sponsored or given their blessings to similar councils which produced other sets of standard canons. But if these ever actually happened, we know nothing about them.

[32] See, for example, Salomon and Schopen 1984.

Finally, the scenario proposed here raises the all-important question of what effect the standardization and writing down of Buddhist texts had on their form and content. The evidence of the new manuscripts—for example, the *Dharmapada* fragments and the Senior *sūtras*—suggests that in Gandhāra at the period in question, and by implication in the rest of the Indian Buddhist world, there was a common fund of basic texts which were known to all, but which differed quite widely in wording, arrangement, and contents between different regions and sectarian communities, perhaps even between individual monasteries. In other words, each community had its own informal corpus of literature—which may or may not be a canon, depending on one's definition of the term—which would have broadly resembled the corresponding corpora of its neighboring communities, which also would have differed from them in varying degrees. In the ordinary day-to-day circumstances of the individual communities, these variations were probably not perceived as problematic. It was perhaps only when different communities were vying for the favor and patronage of rulers of large territories, or when grand councils were called by those rulers, that the inconsistencies became troublesome and the need was felt for an authoritative standard, as we hear about in Xuanzang's story of Kaniṣka's discomfort with the inconsistency of the teachings of the various Buddhist teachers.

Such councils would thus have the effect of eliminating or at least reducing the variation among the local forms of texts and canons. In this regard they would, in theory, have had the same purpose and effect as the councils of earlier periods of the history of Buddhism, with the important difference that now, apparently for the first time, the results were set down in writing rather than being confirmed through communal oral recitation. Thus the history of the Buddhist canons in India can be viewed as a perpetual dynamic tension between, on the one hand, the natural tendency toward local variations (no doubt enhanced by the process of translation into local languages as well as by the general Buddhist tendency to place more value on the sense than on the letter of the law), and on the other hand, an urge for standardization which was favored by centralized ecclesiastical and/or political authorities. While the Buddhist tradition itself inevitably tends in its self-portrayal to emphasize the forces of standardization, the actual archaeological and manuscript evidence, as far as it goes—still not very far, to be sure, but much farther than it used to—tells a rather different story, at least for the earlier period, a story in which local variation was the rule rather than the exception.

In later centuries, various factors such as the growth of larger and more centralized monastic communities, the creation of wide regional and transregional empires such as those of the Kushanas and the Guptas, and above all the widespread

adoption of written texts led to a higher degree of standardization and the development of formal canons like those that are known today in surviving Buddhist communities. These formal canons must have been distilled from various local traditions, particularly those which for political, sectarian, or other reasons—perhaps merely accidents of history or geography—came to be the most influential ones and thus were enshrined as official canons. This model would be nothing revolutionary, but rather accords with well-established patterns of canon formation, including, for example, the one which has recently been hypothesized by Witzel in connection with the development, at a much earlier period, of Vedic canons, wherein "the new Kuru dynasty of Parikṣit, living in the Holy Land of Kurukṣetra, unified most of the Ṛgvedic tribes, brought the poets and priests together in the common enterprise of collecting their texts and of 'reforming' the ritual" (Witzel 1997: 265).

Of course, the newly discovered early manuscripts from northwestern India are still only the tip of a once-large iceberg, most of which we will never see, and they remind us how little we really know of the rich variety of Buddhist literature in antiquity, even as they reveal to us some tantalizing hints of it. As is always the case with the established scriptures of organized religious groups, the approved canons of later and modern Buddhist schools hide at least as much as they reveal of Buddhist literature as a whole. But the recent discoveries, and hopefully others that may be made in the future, are gradually lifting the curtain imposed by later traditions and providing glimpses of the much larger picture that they have hitherto concealed.

POSTSCRIPT

Since this article was written in 2003, significant further advances have been made in the study of relevant material. Among these are radiocarbon tests of certain of the manuscripts, which have yielded results consistent with the dates that had been provisionally ascribed to them on linguistic, paleographic , and textual grounds. These results are presented in Allon et al., forthcoming. A detailed and wide-ranging survey and evaluation of recent discoveries of Buddhsit manuscripts, including the ones discussed in this article as well as others, is provided in Allon, forthcoming.

APPENDIX

Summary of the Main Collections of Kharoṣṭhī/Gāndhārī Manuscripts

KHOTAN *DHARMAPADA* ("THE GĀNDHĀRĪ *DHARMAPADA*")

Contents: Birch-bark scroll with a Gāndhārī version of the *Dharmapada*.
Present location: Divided between Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris and Oriental Institute, St. Petersburg
Provenance: Discovered near Khotan, Xinjiang in 1893
Date: 1st or 2nd century CE
Definitive publication: Brough 1962

BRITISH LIBRARY KHAROṢṬHĪ SCROLLS

Contents: twenty-nine fragments of birch-bark scrolls of widely varying size and condition. Diverse contents, hands, and genres, including *sūtra*, *avadāna*, *abhidharma*, *stotra*, commentaries, etc. Apparently affiliated with Dharmaguptaka school
Present location: British Library, London
Provenance: Uncertain; probably near Haḍḍa, Afghanistan
Date: Probably 1st century CE
Publications: Salomon 1999, 2000; Allon 2001; Lenz 2003

SENIOR SCROLLS

Contents: twenty-four birch-bark scrolls, some nearly complete. All or most in same hand. Mostly *sūtras*, but also one fragment of *Anavatapta-gāthā*.
Present location: Private collection, U.K
Provenance: Uncertain; reportedly near Haḍḍa, Afghanistan
Date: Ca. first half of 2nd century CE; found in jar with inscription dated in year 12, apparently of Kaniṣka
Publication: Salomon 2003

PELLIOT FRAGMENTS

Contents: eight miscellaneous fragments of palm-leaf folios, including one in Sanskrit written in Kharoṣṭhī script. Narrative and doctrinal texts; none identified
Present location: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
Provenance: Subashi and Khitai Bazaar, near Kucha, Xinjiang, China
Date: Probably ca. 2nd or 3rd centuries CE
Publication: Salomon 1998

SCHØYEN KHAROṢṬHĪ FRAGMENTS

Contents: 129 fragments, mostly small, of palm-leaf folios, representing parts of several dozen different manuscripts. Contents diverse, mostly unidentified
Present location: Private collection of M. Schøyen, Spikkestad, Norway
Provenance: Area of Bamiyan, Afghanistan
Date: Probably ca. late 2nd or early 3rd centuries CE
Publication: Allon and Salomon 2000

HIRAYAMA KHAROṢṬHĪ FRAGMENTS

Contents: twenty-seven fragments of palm-leaf folios. Part of same group as Schøyen and Hayashidera Kharoṣṭhī fragments
Present location: Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, Japan
Publication: Allon and Salomon 2000

HAYASHIDERA KHAROṢṬHĪ FRAGMENTS

Contents: eighteen fragments of palm-leaf folios. Part of same group as Schøyen and Hirayama Kharoṣṭhī fragments
Present location: Private collection, Japan
Publication: None to date

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SCROLL

Contents: eight fragments of a single birch-bark scroll, plus two small fragments of another scroll. Main text apparently an *abhidharma* text or other scholastic commentary
Present location: University of Washington Library, Seattle
Provenance: Unknown
Date: Probably 1st or 2nd century
Publication: In progress

MISCELLANEOUS

In addition to the above items, several other individual manuscripts or fragments have been illustrated or reported in various places. References and details provided in Salomon 1999: chapter 3, and one example illustrated in fig. 8, p. 63

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15

A Non-Imperial Religion?

Jainism in Its "Dark Age"

Paul Dundas

When R. W. Williams periodized the history of Jainism in the somewhat unoriginal tripartite form of early, medieval, and modern, he described the first phase, remarkably a span of nearly one thousand years from the beginnings to the fifth century CE, as the religion's "dark age" (Williams 1963: xii). It hardly need be said that the so-called European dark age, far from being predominantly characterized by ignorance and barbarity, as popular belief would have it, was in fact a period of impressive resilience and continuity in cultural production and intellectual activity. By Williams's own admission, the first millennium of Jain history was the time when there appeared a huge corpus of literature, including, as he puts it, "the whole of the Śvetāmbara canon and such fundamental Digambara works as the *Prābhṛtas* of Kundakunda and the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*" (ibid.). He could also have referred to such large-scale expositions of Jain teaching and practice as the *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*, the *Mūlācāra*, the *Bhagavatī Ārādhanā*, as well as the *sāra* texts of Kundakunda, all now regarded as belonging to the Digambara sect.[1] Yet if darkness connotes obscurity, then Williams may be deemed to have been partially correct, for the huge textual culture of early Jainism and the manner and context in which it was produced have generally eluded adequate scholarly interpretation.

Although ethnographic analyses of modern Jain society and practice were unquestionably long overdue, their appearance in the last decade seems to have taken place largely at the expense of research into the religion's earliest textual tradition which, notwithstanding the notable efforts of a few scholars, has been very limited in extent compared to recent investigation of the Pāli Canon. Important recent work has certainly become available (e.g., Bollée 2002 and Johnson 1995), but there can also be little doubt that a wide range of uncertainties about early Jainism remains which may

1 Williams perhaps referred erroneously to the *Prābhṛtas* instead of the *Sāra* texts, since he was aware of Schubring's demonstration of the improbability of the former having been composed by Kundakunda. See Schubring 1977: 344–361. Jain 1996 attributes to the Yāpanīya sect major agency in the production of early Common Era texts which eventually came to be claimed by the Digambara sect, but frequently overstates his case. I have resolved not to discuss the provenance of the texts mentioned by Williams, since it is difficult to deal with this topic without projecting later sectarian issues back onto it.

not be fully resoluble at the present moment. To adapt a descriptive phrase recently used of the Mauryan Empire, the geography of our understanding of the earliest period of Jainism is discontinuous (Sinopoli 2001: 159)[2] and its contours remain in many respects ill-defined. One can only vainly lament the absence of a Jain Aśoka who might have provided some self-revelatory account of what was entailed in being a Jain *upāsaka* and monarch or of a Jain equivalent of the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins which could have refocused our meager understanding of the actualities of lay and ascetic life during the first centuries of the Common Era.

Despite these disadavantages, it may not be too adventurous to delineate at this point what I regard as having been been the general trajectory of Jain history in its earliest period "between the empires." The various trends involved would have been the abandonment of the ideal of solitary wandering, if indeed this ever had any concrete actuality beyond the scriptural descriptions of Mahāvīra's pre-enlightenment career, and the emergence of connected ascetic lineages by the fourth century BCE (with some recruits possibly attracted by the reconfiguration of the warrior ideal characteristic of Jainism's ascetic mode of self-representation, others by the path's elaboration of a brand of "saving knowledge" akin to but different from that of the Buddhists and brahmins); the identity of this ascetic community being formed and steadily reinforced by a growing body of behavioral rules; the extension of the influence of the Jain worldview from the east throughout central and western India and beyond through the agency of some of the aforementioned ascetic lineages, so that Jainism transforms itself from a local to a transregional phenomenon;[3] the gradual emergence of a fully self-conscious lay community, despite Jain teachings advocating the necessity of withdrawal from social action, ensuring that the ascetic community no longer had to rely on random acts of donation; the appearance of a style of devotionalism involving ritual and liturgy, initially centering on ascetic teachers and then becoming image-oriented; the development, stabilization and consequent bifurcation in western India of an elaborate textual culture (some components of which eventually being accepted as lost) enshrining the intellectual, ethical, and imaginative ideals of the community; and, finally, the eventual standardization of Jain doctrine (including a developed cosmology), leading to its attainment by the middle of the first millennium CE of the status of *śāstra* and component of the broader Indian intellectual world (cf. below and Dundas 1997: 495–499). During its first eight centuries or so, an era of progressive economic expansion in north India, Jainism seems to have been given a strong degree of bourgeois support but only sporadic royal sponsorship, so that it might plausibly be styled a "nonimperial" religion during the period under consideration. At the same time, as we shall see, from around the beginning of the Common Era Jain writers increasingly attempted to present the path in royal or courtly terms.

[2] The geographical and administrative discontinuity of early imperial India and a much later state formation is well suggested by Gommans (2002: 201-202): "Both Mauryan and Mughal realms should not be considered as rounded-off territories with neatly demarcated boundaries defining clear in- and outsiders. Their empires were, rather, open and fluid patchworks in which closely controlled areas of more or less settled agriculture alternated with uncultivated wastes and marchlands at best occupied by hard-to-administer nomadic tribes, but all tied together in networks of pastoral and commercial roads that, through the foremost urban centres, connected them to each other as well as to the outside world. In other words, both were imperial configurations with manifold inner frontiers inhabited by forest tribes."

[3] There may have been a degree of early "domestication" of at least a portion of the ascetic community in the form of the adoption of a sedentary mode of life. Cf. the inscription recording the assignation of a *vihāra* to the Koḷiya Gaṇa at Mathurā (Quintanilla 2000: 88–89 and cf. 105 n. 67). The reasons and mechanisms for the spread of Jainism have not been adequately explained, beyond standard reference to the generally peripatetic mode of life of most Jain ascetics and the existence of well-defined trade routes. At the conference, Johannes Bronkhorst drew attention to the spread of the Vedic schools, particularly into the east and south of India, as a possibly analogous progress. Although the tradition claiming that a section of the Jain community migrated into what is now south Karnataka during the Mauryan period is medieval, the palaeography of the Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions carved in cave shelters, the oldest evidence for Jainism in South India, is "consistent with borrowing from Magadha in ca. third century BCE" (Mahadevan 2003: 127).

In this contribution, which makes no claim to address every aspect of early Jain history, I draw attention to certain issues which have exercised recent scholarship, while also pointing to some potentially fruitful avenues of approach for the future. It is to be hoped that those not working in this field (or, dare it be said, perhaps not convinced of its interest) may gain some awareness of how early Jain culture and thought intersected with the broader areas of Indian society and so avoid the temptation to subscribe excessively to Williams's thesis of a "dark age."

First, it will be necessary to consider the nature of the early textual sources.

THE STATUS OF THE JAIN SCRIPTURES AS EVIDENCE

The most awkward problem in Jain studies, as well as the one which has the widest implication for the general interpretation of early historic India, is that of the dating of the texts of the Śvetāmbara Jain *āgama*. There is of course now a virtual scholarly consensus that the dating of Mahāvīra has to be readjusted to take account of the new assessment of the chronological location of the Buddha (Mette 1995).[4] However, the consequent relocation of the earliest stratum of Jainism to a period closer to Aśoka has not entailed the same process of reassessment of the development of doctrine as it has for Buddhism (cf. Schmithausen 1992). Furthermore, the overall uncertainty of Jain scriptural chronology has led to often discrepant interpretations of the status of the texts and the evidence they provide. I refer to two examples of this, one specific and the other more general.

In a recent authoritative overview of early Indian history, Thapar discusses forms of military practice during the pre-Mauryan Nanda period, adducing as evidence of novelties in Magadhan warfare two types of "machine" which were deployed in battle by the aggressive monarch Ajātaśatru (Thapar 2002: 155). No precise source is offered for this by Thapar, but it can surely only derive from the description of two great battles (to which I will return below) found in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* 7.9, the fifth

[4] Cf. Kalyāṇavijaya 2000 for traditional Jain chronology. Note that the *Jinacarita* of the *Kalpa Sūtra* gives two separate datings for Mahāvīra (Jacobi 1884: 270).

aṅga of the Jaina canon and its largest single textual compilation. In a recent study of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, Ohira has posited the development of the Jain scriptures as involving five stages, which she styles "canonical," spanning the production of the earliest texts from the sixth/fifth–fourth centuries BCE to the latter half of the fourth–fifth centuries CE (Ohira 1994a: 1–2). While this model might at times be judged overschematic and mechanical (not to say improbable in its location of some texts in the sixth century BCE), it is the most convincing available thus far, having the immense merit of tracing out a process of development which takes account of the frequently differing stylistic idioms and doctrinal interests of the disparate components of the Śvetāmbara Jain *āgama*. The nucleus of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* is located by Ohira in a third canonical stage, defined in the broadest terms as the first century BCE/first century CE to third century CE. Even if the validity of these chronological parameters be challenged, it still must be conceded that to use, as does Thapar, the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* as direct evidence for the Nanda period both fails to accept the certainty of a lengthy process of evolution for the Jain *āgama* and also effectively underwrites the traditional, but historically and philologically unsustainable, Jain position that the scriptural corpus derives in its virtual entirety from Mahāvīra and the linguistic mediation of his disciples.

An alternative view would underrate the value of the Jain scriptural tradition in favor of an exclusive reliance on archaeological and artistic evidence on the grounds that the latter predates the texts. This is articulated by Quintanilla in the course of an insightful analysis of the votive tablets (*āyāgapaṭa*) found at ancient Mathurā and their connection with the Ardhaphālakas, an ascetic lineage identified by her as having flourished there prior to the emergence of the Śvetāmbara and Digambara sects:

> The earliest known Jaina texts significantly post date most of the *āyāgapaṭas* by at least several hundred years, and their descriptions involve imagery not reflected in the carvings of the *āyāgapaṭas*. Furthermore, the early Jaina texts that describe the realms of liberation and other cosmological aspects belong to the canonical Śvetāmbara Jaina tradition rather than the pre-schismatic, unorthodox Ardhaphālaka sect, which was apparently the sole sect of Jaina monks active during the second century BCE to first century CE, when most of the known Jaina *āyāgapaṭas* were produced. We should not impose all later canonical Śvetāmbara ideals onto imagery made for the Ardhaphālaka Jains, unless there is evidence that they were espoused. (2000: 91 n. 47)

There are some immediate difficulties with Quintanilla's description, most obviously her characterisation of the Ardhaphālaka monks as "non-orthodox" ("nonorthoprax" might be a better expression), since it is difficult to locate any standard of orthodoxy in early Jainism beyond that prescribed in the canonical tradition concerning whose status as reliable witness she is voicing scepticism, and it remains uncertain to what extent they can be regarded as representing an actual sectarian grouping.[5] Leaving these problems aside, Quintanilla's postdating of the textual evidence in respect to the archaeological materials would seem to indicate an awareness of the fact that the version of the Jain scriptures which has come down to us was redacted during the fourth or fifth centuries CE when, according to later tradition, often extremely vague and without agreement as to exact date, significant councils, most notably that at Valabhī, took place (Kalyāṇavijaya 2000: 104–136 and Wiles forthcoming). In this light it seems to have been a short, albeit hardly justifiable step to equate redactive production of authoritative, if not official versions of the scriptures with the actual authorship of these texts, thus inevitably entailing an undervaluation of what they might reveal about pre-Gupta Mathurā. When we find the *Jinacarita* portion of the *Kalpa Sūtra*, one of the most important sources for the life of Mahāvīra, dated to around the fifth century CE by the leading Indian authority on Jain art and architecture (Dhaky 1989: 94), then there is ample confirmation that for some scholars it has become seriously problematic to invoke the evidence of the *āgama* in order to assess the nature of Jainism "between the empires."

The precise mechanism by which the Jain scriptures emerged and were put together is unclear. No doubt, as with the Buddhist canonical texts, the earliest processes involved oral composition and compilation; certainly it is difficult to see how this scenario can be seriously challenged. However, the nature of this early Jain orality and the techniques involved in the transmission of the textual tradition have not been submitted to scholarly investigation, and claims that the original words of Mahāvīra have in certain cases been preserved are based on little more than supposition (cf. Caillat 1994: 77).[6] There is no evidence for an institution within the Jain community comparable to that of the "reciter" (*bhāṇaka*) of early Buddhism, who seems to have specialized in the memorizing and recitation of particular sections of the

5 The evidence for the Ardhaphālakas presented by Quintanilla (1999 and 2001) largely derives from Mathurā. She attributes to them, no doubt with an element of overstatement, the popularization of the image cult and the introduction of *stūpa* veneration in that location. Early representations of flying Ardhaphālaka monks (Quintanilla 2001: 61) are reminiscent of the category of *cāraṇa* monks frequently found in Jain narrative literature, who partly function as the ascetic equivalent of the superhuman *vidyādharas*. See Grafe 1997.

It is clear that there were variant styles of practice available to Jain ascetics in early India, but I am not convinced that the Śvetāmbara and Digambaras, the main sectarian divisions of later Jain history, had fully coalesced by the early common era. No doubt there were more issues at stake in the Jain community than control over the scriptural corpus and disagreement over monastic dress. See Bhatt (1994) who argues for early differentiation between what were to become the Śvetāmbara and Digambara sects in terms of the former's antipathy towards the *anuprekṣā* technique of contemplation.

6 Caillat (1994: 76) refers to the Jain use of the Ardhamāgadhī term *pavayaṇa*, literally "oral teaching," to describe the scriptural canon, and also mentions the occurrence of the Sanskrit equivalent *pravacana* among the brahmins. However, the term does not seem to be common in the oldest texts of the Śvetāmbara *āgama*, being restricted to six occurrences in the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* and one in the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*. See Yamazaki and Ousaka 1999: 92. For the background to the term, see Hillebrandt 1987: 483–484.

Tripiṭaka.[7] Inscriptional references to the Jain monastic rank of *vācaka*, "speaker," are suggestive, but this may well be no more than the equivalent of the later rank of *upādhyāya*, the preceptor responsible for communicating the wording, as opposed to the meaning, of the settled scriptures to novice monks. A portion of the Jain scriptures has in fact been analyzed by Allon and is judged by him to show similarities to Buddhist patterns of oral composition (Allon 1997: 266–272). However, the source of the passages he inspects, the *Aupapātika Sūtra* and the *Anuttaraupapātikadasāḥ Sūtra*, are texts generally accepted as being among the later of the *āgama*, and their fairly ornate structures, involving regular compounding and long rhythmic sentences, might be better compared from a stylistic point of view with the famous inscription of 150 CE of the satrap Rudradāman, whose Sanskrit prose is of a similar form and the apparent product of a nascent belles lettristic culture.[8]

Doubtless the large scale and, in the case of several *sūtras*, apparently centuries-long process of editing to which the Jain scriptures were subjected involved the occlusion of some of the vestiges of an original oral composition. The first book of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, generally accepted since Jacobi's time as the oldest Jain text, shows a variety of stylistic and metrical peculiarities (Schubring 1974: 8), yet the extent to which these might be the result of oral techniques of composition remains undemonstrated. At the same time, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that some of the narrative portions of the canon, whose style might be judged to be proto-kāvyaesque and which scholarship has judged to be later, were most likely produced in a literary culture where writing had taken hold. In short, identification of obvious and specific traces of oral composition, such as formulae (but cf. Allon 1997: 268 n. 12), within Jain canonical texts has proved elusive enough to prevent any serious concrete conclusions in this area.[9]

In what has been perhaps the most painstaking recent work on the early texts of the Śvetāmbara Jain *āgama*, the late K. R. Candra was able to show that the form in which they have come down to us is in fact the outcome of a process of redactional

[7] For the *bhāṇaka* in early Theravāda Buddhism, see Hinüber 1997: 25. At the conference, Gregory Schopen pointed out that evidence for a *bhāṇaka* institution is not widespread in early Buddhist inscriptions.

[8] Ohira (1994a: 41 and 173) suggests that the regularly recurring canonical descriptive passages (*varṇaka*) derive from the last council. It is not clear if she is referring to their insertion in textual compilations or their actual composition. See Muni Jambūvijaya's third appendix (pp. 502–526) to his edition of the *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra* for the *varṇaka* inserts in that text.

[9] Stylistic analyses of texts of the Jain *āgama* are extremely rare. For an example of the necessary approach, see Balbir 1995: 5–10.

Houben (2001b) has suggested that a possible factor effecting the move away from orality in intellectual circles in early India was that the Hellenistic culture of the north-west introduced philosophical texts committed to writing. Certainly the context he adumbrates for Buddhist and brahmanical literature would be appropriate for their Jain counterpart. The *Niśītha Sūtra*, which Ohira (1994a: 1 and 15) regards as having being written as Jainism spread to Mathurā sometime during the third to first centuries BCE, contains what would be by this dating a significant reference to a monk writing a letter (quoted by Hinüber 1999: 88).

overlaying, and as a consequence various *sūtras* show the phonetic influence of Māhārāṣṭrī, a western Prākrit (Chandra 2001 and cf. Caillat 1996). Even though Candra's reconstructions, particularly that of *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.1 (Candra 1997), may not supplant the authority of other scholarly editions, they must effect reconsideration of the view, still held by some, that the entire *āgama* goes back in its final form as transmitted to us today to near the beginning of Jainism's eastern origins. In this respect, evidence is emerging that crucial elements in Jain scriptural formation were western in origin. Wiles has established that there was one single recension of the text of the *Nirayāvalikāḥ Sūtra*, one of the late canonical works, thus confirming the judgment of Alsdorf and Tieken with regard to other *sūtras* (Wiles 2000: lxiii). These corroborative examples, which suggest the possibility of a consistent pattern, support the conclusion that all existing manuscripts of the Śvetāmbara canon, leaving aside some of the *prakīrṇaka* texts, derive from one recension established through an editorial process which culminated in two councils held at Mathurā and Valabhī in the fourth and fifth centuries.[10] Tieken has argued that the ordering of the Mahāvīra biography as found in the second chapter of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* and the *Jinacarita* of the *Kalpa Sūtra* confirms that theory that the Jain canon could only have been compiled in Gujarat and he also adduces lexical evidence substantiating a western provenance for another text (Tieken 1995–96: 587 and 2001).[11]

Although we need not follow some scholars in claiming a near primordial Jain connection with Gujarat (cf. Shastri 2000: 230 and Williams 1966: 4), failure to consider possible western influence on Jain scriptural texts can condition to erroneous effect the interpretation of early Jain history, as can be seen from one small example, that of the heretic Jamāli. This figure, the supposed proponent of the controversial view that an action in the course of being performed is not the same as that action when completed, is generally said by Śvetāmbara Jain tradition to have been both the son of Mahāvīra's sister and, through having married his daughter, his son-in-law. Schubring notes that this detail is not mentioned in the two canonical biographies of Mahāvīra, namely, book two of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* and the *Jinacarita* section of the *Kalpa Sūtra*, nor in the *Bhagavatī*, and he cites the *Āvaśyaka* commentarial literature as the authority for the twofold relationship, claiming without any evidence that Jamāli's name had been suppressed in the earlier texts (Schubring 2000: 33). Deleu argues for something similar, claiming that the two episodes in *Bhagavatī* 9.33 (located by Ohira 1994a: 148 to the latter half of the fourth century CE), the sole extended canonical source for Jamāli, "are linked up to oppose Jamāli, the heretical monk of kṣatriya birth, whose relationship with [Mahāvīra] the text expressly conceals, and Devāṇandā, the righteous nun of brāhmaṇa birth who [Mahāvīra] says is his real mother" (Deleu 1970: 60).

[10] Cf. Hinüber (2001: 72–73). Dhaky (1989: 94) regards the early Prākrit commentarial (*niryukti*) verse collections as late Gupta productions.

[11] See also Roth (1986: 151) for what he claims to be the oldest literary reference to the *dīnāra* coin in a passage in the archaic *veḍha* meter in the *Kalpa Sūtra*, which on Jacobi's reckoning dates back to the last two centuries BCE. At the same time, he points out that the coin was imported into India in large numbers in the first five centuries CE. Cf. Chandra (1970: 11) for the Kushana introduction of the name *dīnāra* for coins in the first century CE.

The particular relationship between Mahāvīra and Jamāli, which Schubring and Deleu claimed had been "hushed up" in the early biographical literature concerning the *tīrthaṅkara* (cf. Ohira 1994a: 2001), does indeed not predate in textual form the commentary literature on the *Āvaśyaka Sūtra*, which was produced in western India. Furthermore, through Jamāli's supposed marriage with his mother's brother's daughter there occurs a clear instance of cross-cousin marriage, a practice prevalent in the south of India and so generally styled Dravidian. Trautmann has drawn attention to the fact that cross-cousin marriage of the Dravidian pattern has also been a constant feature of family alliances in western India (which is, of course, non-Dravidian ethnically) and that any sources which describe it (in fact he only adduces one of Jain provenance) cannot be of eastern origin, even though their narrative subject matter may be located in that region, because there is no obvious evidence of that form of alliance being practiced within the Ganges basin (Trautmann 1974).

Thus the conclusion must be that the story of Jamāli's marital relationship with Mahāvīra cannot be be based on historical actuality, let alone involve, as claimed in the case of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, some sort of suppression of information, but rather reflects the western Indian provenance of the *Āvaśyaka* commentarial literature.[12] While it might be going too far to suggest that the whole story of Jamāli has been anachronistically linked with Mahāvīra by the redactors of a scriptural tradition whose center of operations had by around the fourth century CE gradually shifted into western India, this example might nonetheless instil caution with regard to accepting everything in the early Jain textual corpus as of being an originally eastern origin.

JAINISM IN THE EARLY INDIAN IMPERIAL CONTEXT

One of the most significant moments in early Indian history was the transformation of Buddhism from a relatively ill-defined renunciatory movement initially localized in the Ganges basin to an imperial religion with aspirations toward universal hegemony which was projected into prominence during the Mauryan period. Jainism is generally assumed to have followed in early Buddhism's historical wake as a kind of junior partner, and notice is frequently made of the emperor Aśoka's declaration of protection of various renunciatory groups as signifying that Jainism might also be deemed to have been a religion with some sort of imperial patronage. So Collins in his large-scale sociology of global intellectual change declares that the Jains "had close royal ties during the early buildup of imperial power" (Collins 1998: 187).

It might well be argued that a standard feature of the consolidation of imperial state formations of any variety at any place and time is the fostering of quasi-imperial religions whose totalizing claims and concomitant symbolic discourse connected to kingly authority reciprocally bolster the ideology of secular power with its ambitions of control and expansion. If in that light the expression "Mauryan Buddhism" seems quite natural, given that religion's role during Aśoka's reign in the third century BCE and its subsequent swift adoption of an imperial-style narrative in which the Buddha plays the role of "world-conquering emperor" (*cakravartin*), it unfortunately has to be conceded that the equivalent expression "Mauryan Jainism" seems to have minimal descriptive force or attraction, and "Kushana Jainism" (notwithstanding the large number of Jain images, etc., produced during the Kushana period) or "Sātavāhana Jainism" even less so. Mahāvīra's supposed association with the kings Śreṇika and Kūṇika (that is to say, Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru of Buddhist sources; cf. Silk 1997) and a subsequent Jain connection with the proto-imperial Nanda Dynasty are perfectly plausible,[13] yet by far the bulk of the evidence for these derives from a later period, with much of it not occurring before the early scriptural commentaries which are of western provenance.

It can be conjectured that the early spread of Jainism was imperialist in style in that it seems to have involved if not the conquest of local demiurges (*yakṣa*) and clan tutelary deities (*kuladevatā*), then at least the development of alliances with their cultic sites and supporters (Dundas 2003: 135–136). The appropriation and reconfiguration of local religiosities was necessary for the full accommodation of a renunciatory path whose ascetic members depended on the resources of reliable lay support. However, early evidence of regular Jain patronage by royal houses, while not nonexistent, is sketchy.[14] Revealingly, there are no depictions of *tīrthaṅkaras* on royal coinage, even that of the religiously highly pluralistic Kushanas, and no substantial evidence of royal land grants to the Jain community, possibly because of the very small rural base amongst lay supporters (Sahgal 1994: 211 and H. G. Shastri 2000: 231).[15] Early Jain images (for which, see below) lack royal insignia, such as the parasol, which occur only at a later date (Dhaky 1994: 295).[16] The evidence of patronage of the Jain

12 This material is taken from Dundas (forthcoming), which provides an account of the development of the story of Jamāli in later Jainism.

13 See Fitzgerald 2001: 72–73 n. 31 for the Nandas being later regarded in the Purāṇas as *adhārmika*.

14 Singh (1972: 88) quotes inscriptional evidence for an apparent connection with a king of Pabhosa who donated cave dwellings for the use of Jain ascetics. Cf. Sahgal (1994: 218).

15 Gombrich (1975: 219) views Jainism as, unlike Buddhism, being unable to provide legitimation of the status quo in peasant societies. The scanty inscriptional evidence deriving from a village milieu might seem to substantiate this view for the ancient period, although the existence of a Jain cult of the farmer deity Balarāma in the Mathurā area would seem to point to an early Common Era connection between Jainism and agriculturalists. See Tiwari and Giri 1985–86.

Gombrich's further statement (1975: 220) that "the soteriological position of the Jaina layman, even if he is a sedentary banker, is too unattractive to be widely adopted by choice" is extreme and based on the premise that early Jainism never adopted an ethic of intention. With regard to intention, Johnson (1995: 15 and Part 2) argues that it was not until Umasvāti's (c. fourth–fifth centuries CE) systematization of Jain teachings that volitional activity was introduced as a necessary component of karmic bondage. There are, however, disparate views on this topic in earlier Jain texts. See Ohira 1994a: 11 and 165.

Note that the term *upāsaka* apparently used in Jain scriptural texts to denote laymen in general may in fact refer to advanced lay practitioners of the sort identified in early Mahāyāna Buddhism by Harrison (1995: 59). For an alternative view, see Cousins 2003.

16 Kumar (1992–93) refers to the liturgical text, the *Devendrastava*, classed among the *prakīrṇaka* group of scriptures, as preserving the only ancient textual record of an

community by the eastern monarch Khāravela remains isolated and in many respects inscrutable because of the interpretative difficulties associated with his famous inscription at Hāthigumphā near what is now Bhubaneśvar in Orissa (Salomon 1998: 142 and 164). Khāravela's donation of cave dwellings to Jain ascetics at that site undoubtedly bears witness to a partiality for Jainism (cf. Sahoo 1994), although his claim in the Hāthīgumphā inscription that he "honored all non-brahman renunciatory groups" (*savvapāsaṃḍapūjaka*) is reminiscent of Aśoka's similar inscriptional assertion of pluralism, both no doubt being ideologically motivated and intended to bolster claims of the universality of their rule.[17] After Khāravela's death, evidence of any sort of royal patronage of Jainism in Kalinga is difficult to find.

The general lack of participation by Jainism in political affairs through royal patronage during the Mauryan period is confirmed by the absence of any clear extended reference to the religion in the *Mahābhārata*. Scholarship on the epic has recently been demonstrating how one of the most important cultural events to take place between the empires was the production of a complex brahmin response, embodied in the textual form of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, to the emperor Aśoka and his perceived espousal of Buddhism as a state religion (Biardeau 2002 and Fitzgerald 2001). Biardeau in particular has recently subjected the *Mahābhārata* to a close reading which finds consistent allusion throughout the epic to Buddhism and a type of kingship ambivalent toward violence. Undoubtedly the Jains seem to have had only minimal engagement with the figure of Aśoka,[18] but at the same time they formulated a response to the *Mahābhārata*, perhaps, in a manner redolent of their generally

important component of the imperial lion capital symbol. However, the dating of the *Devendrastava* remains controversial.

[17] A. M. Shastri (2000) has proposed dating of the Hāthīgumphā inscription to the first century BCE–first century CE on the basis of its supposed synchronicity with the Sātavāhanas. Thapar (2002: 212–213) sums up the inscription on the basis of the version published by Jayaswal and Banerji in volume 20 of *Epigraphia Indica*. The fullest recent treatment of the Hāthīgumphā inscription is by Kant (2000). Unfortunately, he somewhat complacently ignores pertinent earlier criticism of the first edition of his study by Hinüber (1975) and Norman (1973) and leaves many difficulties.

Note that all interpretations of the inscription seem to agree that Khāravela claimed to have brought back to his kingdom from Magadha an image of the Jina supposedly looted by a Nanda monarch. This would push back the existence of images in Jainism to the fourth century BCE, which is some time before the earliest artistic evidence of this phenomenon. For the appropriation of images as a component of the rhetoric of political conquest in medieval India, see Davis (1997: ch. 2). Khāravela is the first recorded example of a type of monarch who, as at a later period in medieval south India, did not allow partiality toward Jainism with its doctrine of *ahiṃsā* to preclude military action against his neighbors.

[18] King Aśoka, his son Kuṇāla, and, in particular, his grandson Samprati are mentioned in the later Jain commentarial literature. Samprati is associated with Ujjain and the cultural infiltration of Jainism into south India through the agency of wandering ascetics. Compare the Theravāda Buddhist figure of Mahinda, Aśoka's son, who was associated with Vidiśā, not far from Ujjain in central India, and was according to tradition responsible for taking Buddhism to Sri Lanka.

ambivalent status, by way both of criticism and attempted endorsement. The most obvious example of this is the Jainization of Draupadī, the main female protagonist of the *Mahābhārata*, whose career as recounted in the sixth *aṅga* of the canon, the *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra*, involved both a careless attitude to a Jain monk which brought about his death and a highly developed sexuality which led to her association in a later birth with the five Pāṇḍava brothers and their violent activities (cf. Schubring 1978: 48–58).

Another, by Ohira's (1994a: 22) reckoning near contemporaneous, example of a connection to the *Mahābhārata* can, I would suggest, be identified at *Bhagavatī Sūtra* 7.9 which describes two battles which supposedly took place during Mahāvīra's lifetime involving King Kūṇiya / Ajātaśatru and tribal confederacies. These were called the "Battle of the Thorns like Great Stones" (*Mahāsilākaṇṭayasaṃgāma*), the intensity of which was such (according to the commentator Abhayadeva) that the touch of thorns, leaves, twigs, and the like were as severe to the protagonists as blows from great stones, and the "Battle of the Chariot with the Club" (*Rahamusalasaṃgāma*), in the course of which engagement Kūṇiya was able to effect a massacre of his opponents by means of an automaton-like chariot without horses or driver which careered about the battlefield dealing out death by means of an attached club. Mahāvīra confirms that virtually all the dead participants will, as immoral and nonrenunciant men, be reborn in lower realms of existence in the form of animals and hellbeings, with only two Jain laymen who had fought in self-defence gaining positive rebirths (*Bhagavatī Sūtra*: 300–308).[19]

Although the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* narrative purports to describe specific political events which occurred around the fifth century BCE, there can be little doubt that in actuality it is referring to the martial world portrayed in the Hindu epic where a glorious death in battle was reckoned to lead to heaven. The name of the second battle may allude to *parvan* 16 of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Mausalaparvan*, one of the later portions of the epic, in which a club (*musala*) deals out slaughter on a colossal scale, while that of the first may obliquely refer to *Mausalaparvan* 6.4, which describes how the aforementioned club was powdered down and turned into a type of grass (*Mahābhārata tṛṇa* = *Bhagavatī Sūtra kaṇṭaya* ?) which still functioned as a destructive weapon.

Unquestionably the almost manic violence described in *Bhagavatī Sūtra* 7.9 suggests the equally feverish world of conflict in the *Mahābhārata*, whose core was probably approximately contemporary with that of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*. Significantly, the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* conveys no outright condemnation of the waging of war as such; rather it makes clear that going into battle when commanded by one's leader is obligatory, but also that to do so with the wrong, impassioned attitude, specifically one not informed by Jain values, leads to an ignominious rebirth. In other words, there appears to occur here here an example of an ambivalent view toward the institution of

[19] Compare in the Theravāda Buddhist *Mahāvaṃsa* the aftermath to the Buddhist king Duṭṭhagāmaṇi's battlefield slaughter of the Tamils.

kingship and the imperial process, expressed through a reconfiguration of brahmin perceptions, which was to persist throughout Jain history (Dundas 1991).[20]

If Jainism lacked any concrete access to power between the empires to the extent that it can consequently be styled a nonimperial religion during this period, it nonetheless frequently attempted to present itself in imperial terms. Mahavīra's grandiose claim to omniscience (at least as it evolved in descriptions of his attainments in the *āgama*), literal and simultaneous knowledge of everything in all quarters of the universe in the past, present, and future, underpinned Jainism's claim to hegemony among other religious paths and might be viewed as the soteriological counterpart to the (theoretically) unbounded frontiers of empire. Major Jain textual enterprises such as the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* and the two encyclopaedic *sūtras*, the *Sthānāṅga* and *Samavāyāṅga*, markedly exemplify a quasi-imperial totalizing tendency and can be equated with approximately contemporary non-Jain works, such as the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, and the Sarvāstivādin Buddhist *Abhidharma*, which embody similar attempts to "sum up" and textually control human and metaphysical reality.[21] A correlation between state control of India and the production and organization of Jain knowledge can also be found in the form of the great "Scripture in Six Parts" (*Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*), attributed to the editorial activities of the early Common Era monk Dharasena, where the "six quarters of the scriptural tradition" are surely intended to bring to mind the six quarters (*ṣaṭkhaṇḍa*) of India, that is to say three northern and three southern, one of which is āryan and the other five (barbarian) mleccha.[22]

In mythical terms, the *Jambūdvīpaprajñapti Sūtra* (which Ohira locates to the early fifth stages of āgamic development, that is to say the latter half of the fourth century CE, and claims to show puranic influence) is the harbinger of what was in

20 Vimala Sūri's Prākrit version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Paumacariya*, which dates from the second half of the fifth century CE (Chandra 1970: 9–17), would have been relevant here, were it not for its being slightly beyond the chronological parameters set for the conference. For a valuable contextualization of it, see Thapar (2000: 660–666).

I would tentatively suggest that the tradition, famous in Śvetāmbara Jainism from around the sixth century but referring to a period several centuries before, of the teacher Kālaka's introduction of the Sakas into west India to revenge his sister who has been raped by King Gardabhilla (cf. Brown 1933), a story embodying all the ferocity and cynicism of an episode in the *Mahābhārata*, may equally betoken Jain dissatisfaction with the corrupting effects of kingship and existent imperial structures and a desire to project Jainism, at least ideally, more fully into the political situation.

21 See Ohira 1994a: 139 for Jain classificatory activity. Bronkhorst (2001b: 26) argues that the Vaiśeṣika system was created in response to the Sarvāstivādins.

22 See *Jambūdvīpaprajñapti Sūtra* ch. 1. Dharasena, regarded as a member of the Digambara Jain sect, is traditionally associated with the Saurāṣṭra region of Gujarat. The *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*, supposedly the last remains of a deteriorating scriptural tradition, was put into textual form by Puṣpadanta and Bhūtabali after hearing the teaching of Dharasena. This particular monastic name had later royal associations, as witness no fewer than four kings of the Maitraka Dynasty of Gujarat called Dharasena. See H. G. Shastri (2000: ch. 2). One might note also at a slightly later date the *Nayacakra* of Mallavādin (circa sixth century?) which evinces a totalizing tendency by its use of the standard royal symbol of the wheel/discus (*cakra*) as a device to group contemporaneous intellectual systems under the rubric of various standpoints (*naya*).

idiom the most imperial of all Jain literary production, the Universal History (so called by western scholars), which assimilated and transformed the stories of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, and other epic and puranic protagonists by locating them in an uncompromisingly Jain imaginative universe. This text's large-scale mapping of the cosmos and description (ch. 3) of the subjugation of part of it by the righteous monarch Bharata can be regarded as the Jain counterpart both to the Buddhist *Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta* and to the descriptions of space which were a feature of the creation of imperial formations in early India.[23] The tendency to view the universe in regal terms was further extended to heavenly realms, such as that of the Vaimānika gods, which are described in the Jain cosmological texts as being populated by a divine hierarchy clearly modeled on the princes, ministers, and functionaries typical of the ancient Indian state (Kirfel 1967: 262).

THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF JAINISM

That there was an awareness within the Jain community of its path's original location in a highly diverse world of intersecting teachers and doctrines which must have exerted a significant degree of influence can seen from the *Ṛṣibhāṣitāni*, a text regarded by some as among the most ancient of the tradition and perhaps produced by a single author who belonged to the ascetic tradition deriving from Mahāvīra's predecessor Pārśva.[24] Jainism's teachings in their classical form can also be regarded as the product of a variety of currents. Their systematization, most likely a feature of the gradual stabilization of the Jain ascetic community as a component of the wider Indian socioreligious world, is generally associated with the authoritative presentation of the doctrine by Umāsvāti in the *Tattvartha Sūtra* (circa fourth or fifth centuries CE), although it can equally be traced in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*. Umāsvāti's decision to couch his authoritative summation of Jain teaching in Sanskrit rather than Prākrit was not simply an acknowledgment of that language's hegemony in the area of intellectual communication but was surely also intended to signal awareness of the contemporary interplay of a variety of complementary explanations of reality expressed in the

23 Cf. Walters 1997. The *Vasudevahiṇḍi*, of uncertain date but from perhaps fifth century CE, parallels the *digvijaya* of Bharata in the *Jambūdvīpaprajñapti Sūtra*, although the conquests effected by its hero, the father of Kṛṣṇa, are of a sexual nature. See Mette 1973 for common brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jain (deriving from the *Jambudvīpaprajñapti* and *Jīvājīvābhigama Sūtras* and later commentarial literature) legends about the origin of culture. Ohira (1994b: 481–482) views the relationship of the Jains with the Vaiṣṇavas as having been confrontational.

24 The speedy disappearance of the *Ṛṣibhāṣitāni* seems to have been the result of an act of suppression or censorship prompted by the favorable tone it uses to describe certain doctrines which must have appeared markedly un-Jain to later generations. Jain (1988: 2–5) regards the *Ṛṣibhāṣitāni* as one of very oldest Jain texts, whereas Schubring (1974: 106) sees its account of Tetaliputta as an adaptation of the version found in the *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra*.

brahmanical medium.[25] This complex traffic of ideas and doctrinal tenets amongst the various intellectual groupings in early India, brahmin, Buddhist, and Jain, might well be regarded as deriving its stimulus from the emergence of a rationalist and critical intellectual style typical of an increasingly literate urbanized environment (Houben 2001b).

Here I simply draw attention to a few examples, some obvious, others somewhat more debatable, of interaction between early Jainism and other contemporary religio-philosophical currents.

1a. Early Buddhist meditation structures, specifically the so-called formless realms, show evidence of influence by, most likely, Jain meditative patterns which privilege the withdrawal of sensory activity (Bronkhorst 1995).[26]

1b. The Buddhist riposte (found in the *Tevijja Sutta*) to the Upaniṣadic claim about union with Brahman describes the monk (*bhikkhu*) pervading the universe with his ethicized consciousness, i.e., his moral qualities (Gombrich 1996: 60–61). The rather strange Jain teaching of *kevalisamudghāta*, probably first formulated in the common era (Ohira 1994a: 103 and 181), whereby the enlightened *kevalin*, prior to attaining *siddhi*, equalizes his karmic matter by expanding his self-monad (*jīva*) to the limits of the universe and then retracting it, seems to be a literalist or at least materialist version of the foregoing, perhaps developed under Buddhist inspiration.

1c. Buddhism and Jainism evince a shared belief in the existence of geographical regions beyond the parameters of Bhāratavarṣa, access to which could not be gained by ordinary human beings. For the Jains, the region of Mahāvideha, part of the continent of Jambūdvīpa, represented a potential place of liberation, regularly described in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* and the narrative portions of the *āgama*, while for the early Buddhists certain continents (*dvīpa*) are associated with the continuing accessibility of some of the Buddha's disciples, as in the case of the "island" of Aparagodānīya, the abode of the *arhat* Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja (Lamotte 1958: 768–769).[27] It might be added that the Jains here appear to have been strongly influenced by puranic cosmography.

2. According to Ohira (1994a: 38, 113, and 240) Jainism had incorporated an atomic theory as part of its basic ontology from around the first century BCE, when the nucleus of the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* was taking shape. Although the provenance of this theory is unclear,[28] its Jain manifestation would appear to be earlier than that found

[25] There were clearly practical advantages in the adoption of Sanskrit by communities whose intellectuals had previously employed vernaculars. Cf. Salomon (2001: 249–251) for the possibility of Buddhists being influenced by the attractions of brahmanical styles of recitation and calendrical reckoning.

[26] Wynne (2000), however, sees Upaniṣadic influence here.

[27] Rebirth in Mahāvideha was most likely posited as a means of alleviating the difficulty caused by Jain tradition's insistence from a relatively early period that liberation was restricted to the time of Mahāvīra and his disciples. Buddhist tradition called for a necessary suspension of deliverance for some saintly individuals who could then serve as protectors of the *dharma*.

[28] The Jains seem to have introduced a theory of atoms in order to make their explanation of the workings of karma more coherent. See Ohira (1994a: 101). While the plausibility of any influence of Epicurus upon the Buddha and his renunciatory contemporaries is chronologically impossible to sustain (see Halbfass 1992), it may

among the Sarvāstivādin Buddhists, whose ontological model contains an important atomist component. However, as Bronkhorst (2000) has shown, the particular Jain use of the term *pudgala* and their espousal of a theory of composite entities reveal familiarity with the Buddhist Abhidharma.

3. At least one Jain teacher seems to have formulated teachings which had an affinity, eventually to be judged heretical, with the Vaiśeṣika school.[29] Such an affinity is rendered understandable by reference to the pluralistic perspective on the universe shared by Jainism and Vaiśeṣika (Houben 1994: 723 n. 12 and 730), although it is likely that Vaiśeṣika's origins, unlike Jainism's, were pro-brahmanical. There is good reason to conclude that the Jain ontological categories of *dharma* and *adharma*, "motion" and "stasis," necessary to render consistent certain teachings such as the ascent of the liberated *jīva* to top of the universe and its eternal dwelling there, reveal Vaiśeṣika influence (Ohira 1994a: 106 and 248–254, referring to Frauwallner, and cf. Bronkhorst 2001b: 20–21).[30] Equally, there occur rejections of Vaiśeṣika doctrine in Jainism, as in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*'s nonacceptance of the standpoint that being becomes nonbeing on the destruction of being (Ohira 1994a: 99).

4. From as early as circa the second century BCE, the Jains had established a relationship with nascent Vaiṣṇavism, with the figure of Kṛṣṇa being assimilated to the biography of the twenty-second *tīrthaṅkara* Nemi. The well-known story of the transfer of Mahāvīra's embryo shows obvious similarities to the account of the birth of Kṛṣṇa's brother, Baladeva (Schubring 1926: 20–21). Furthermore, the *Nārāyaṇīya Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, a central source for the emergence of Vaiṣṇavism, evinces a variety of possible overlaps with elements of Jain soteriology, e.g., the land of Śvetadvīpa and the Jain *siddhaloka* (Oberlies 1997: 115–118).

5. Exemplary narratives shared across often permeable sectarian boundaries are

nonetheless seem reasonable, *pace* Bronkhorst (2001b: 31), to enquire once again as to whether some version of his atomic theory could have percolated to the east at a later time. There is evidence of at least one Greek philosophical text being in circulation in northwest India (Bronkhorst 2001b: 28 and Houben 2001b: section 5.6 n. 30). For the appearance of *yavana* astronomy in India at the beginning of the Common Era, see Falk 2001.

[29] Chalua (i.e., Ṣaḍulūka; called Chalua Rohagutta in the *Sthavirāvalī* section of the *Kalpa Sūtra*: see Jacobi 1884: 290) occurs as the sixth in the list of seven Jain heretics (*nihnava*) which appears for the first time at *Sthānāṅga Sūtra* 587 (Jambūvijaya's edition, p. 241). Cf. Thakur's introduction to the edition of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* by Jambūvijaya (1982: 6–8), where the earliest source quoted for Chalua, Rohagutta's quasi-Vaiśeṣika teachings (*davvāichappayattha*) is Jinabhadra's *Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya* (sixth century CE). The seven Jain heretics are Jamāli, Tiṣyagupta, Āṣāḍha, Aśvamitra, Gaṃga, Chalua, and Goṣṭhāmāhila. The doctrines with which these heretics are associated cannot be treated independently of each other, in that they all relate to imprecise framings of what had had emerged as aspects of systematized Jain teachings. The refutation of them was part of the continuing process by which Jain thought became standardized.

[30] Fujinaga 2003 proposes a development of the senses of *dharma* and *adharma* in Jain ontology which does not invoke Vaiśeṣika influence.

clear evidence of Jainism's participation in a large-scale north Indian literary culture during the first few centuries of the Common Era. Apart from the broad connection between the *Bṛhat Kathā* tradition and the emergent Jain Universal History (Oberlies 1997: 115), a specific example can be seen in the form of the story of King Brahmadatta, which from its first Jain occurrence at *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* chapter 13 was to become expanded into a huge trans-sectarian narrative cycle in western India (Oberlies 1996).[31] A version of the Siṃhala story occurs both in the *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra* and the Buddhist *avadāna* collections, which shows signs of a common narrative origin with changes appropriate to context being introduced (Lienhard 2003), while, conversely, the story of King Paesī found in both Buddhist and Jain versions evinces signs of separate development (Bollée 2002 and Houben 2001b: sec. 4.3, n. 14).[32]

JAIN IMAGES AND RELICS: THE EARLY EVIDENCE

The view that there was at the outset a historically "pure" Jainism which was gradually penetrated and so corrupted in the early Common Era by the devotional and ritual idiom of puranic Hinduism remains a resilient one (see Ohira 1994a: 43). Yet there can be no doubt of the obvious fact that the picture we gain from the first book of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* is of a Jain socioreligious world different from that presented to us by the *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra*. The large number of inscriptions and the surviving 172 surviving Jina images from Mathurā produced during the Kushana period make this still more clear.

A series of factors may have determined the appearance of an image cult centering on the Jinas. References to worship-like respectful homage to Mahāvīra in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* and the *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra* by converts such as Skandaka, Ṛṣabhadatta, and Jamāli at the time of their renunciation (Dundas 2003: 133–134 and forthcoming) are suggestive of the possible origins of a *bhakti*-focused form of worship, but in actuality they most likely stem from a period when the image cult and the ritual associated with it were already in place. No doubt the necessity to commemorate the dead and provide a replacement doubling for the deceased hero-teacher is essential in the earliest context of the appearance of images in any culture (Steiner 2001: 5–6 and cf. Granoff 1992). So worship of the Jinas may have had its beginnings in Jainism with *guru-vandana*, the veneration of living mendicant teachers. An inevitable next step would have seen this veneration transposed toward the deceased founder of the ascetic lineage and, as a liberated being, his consequent deification (Cort 2002a: 82–83) or, better, elevation to some sort of quasi-transcendent status. Falk has described how in ancient India there was from late Vedic times envisaged as existing a close equivalence between men and gods (*deva*) and that this, together with the early production of relatively unsophisticated terracotta images, led

31 Oberlies (1996: 275) identifies two basic Jain versions of this story.

32 See Silk 1997 for the shared Jain and Buddhist stories of Kings Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru. Although the *Nirayāvalikāḥ Sūtra*, which is the source for the Jain narrative, is one of the latest texts of the *āgama*, it is no doubt based on older material.

to the appearance of images of gods from around the fourth–third centuries BCE.[33] The famous naked male torso found at Lohanipur, whether Mauryan or, more likely, Kushana (Cort 2002a: 67 n. 27 and Leoshko 1999: 333–334), is generally taken as indicative evidence of some sort of representational cult in early Jainism which reached an early height at Mathurā,[34] and certainly inscriptions from the many *āyāgapaṭas* of the Mathurā region make clear that *pūjā* to the *tīrthaṅkaras* with lay and ascetic involvement was an important dimension of this (see Quintanilla 1999 and 2000).[35]

However, so prevalent is the association of images with devotional worship that other aspects of the representation of heroic figures may be ignored. As Cort remarks, "A cult of images does not automatically indicate a theology of *bhakti*" (Cort 2002a: 70) and he suggests that *bhakti* can simply mean "enthusiasm" and need not necessarily imply an interactive devotional relationship (Cort 2002b: 738). We may indeed be failing to grasp all the nuances of practice relating to the early images of the Jinas if we become preoccupied solely with their role as objects of worship. Without attempting to argue for any direct transcultural influence, one might refer to a near-contemporary analogous example as a means of highlighting the uncertainties that still pertain to our understanding of the function of images in early India.

The Greek philosopher Epicurus (341–271 BCE) is known to have articulated his abandonment of mental and physical turbulence by withdrawing from society into the company of followers of a similar disposition, a community which offered an alternative to the dominant culture. However, the Epicurean movement was faced with the inevitable necessity of reproducing and perpetuating itself by the process of some form of recruitment despite its rejection of social ties. To this end, statues of Epicurus were crafted in such a way as to "move the soul" in order to gain converts to the sect without compromising its principle of withdrawal from society (Frischer 1992).

33 Perhaps to be added to Falk's textual evidence is *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* 1.11.3 (Olivelle 2000: 43 and 44), which refers to a sacrifice to gods whose (former) nature was human (*manuṣyaprakṛtīnāṃ devānām*).

34 Ghose 2002 makes a detailed argument for a late Mauryan origin for the Lohanipur torso. Tiwari (1995: 17) refers to the discovery of a c. third-century BCE terracotta Jina image from Ayodhyā.

35 An image of a Jina simultaneously relates both to its human aspect and its attainment of liberation as a *siddha*. As such, there is a necessary element of ambiguity about its status and role in worship, in that the Jina is free from passions and the necessity to act, yet according to the early *caityavandana* liturgy deemed to be capable of granting liberation to devotees (Cort 2002a: 75 and Johnson 2003). A similar situation pertains to the role of the Buddha in early Buddhism, which scholarship has treated as involving his simultaneous presence and absence for the devotee.

In this respect I would note that from the point of view of early Indian intellectual history presence and absence as simultaneously involving operative influence can be seen most markedly in the Pāṇinīya notion of *lopa*, "zero substitution," familiarity with which is essential for any mastery of the basic techniques of Sanskrit grammatical analysis (Varma 1978). While not all would have had access to Pāṇini's grammar, its role in establishing wider patterns of understanding could have entailed that *lopa* was a notion which informed devotional perspectives on the representation of liberated teachers, or at least rendered them less problematic. Cf. Houben (2001a: 35–36) for the audience for grammar in ancient India.

Eventually Epicurus was deified by his followers, most famously by Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura* 5.8. There is no evidence here of an Epicurean devotional cult focused on the images of the saving teacher; rather such representations functioned as a source of inspiration and potential emulation by his followers. This is not dissimilar to Cort's understanding of *bhakti* and early images of the Jinas as making the heroic asceticism of the few accessible to all (Cort 2002b: 738). Whatever its date and provenance, the intense and almost tactile masculinity of the Lohanipur torso appears a prime exemplification of this.

The major problem in early Jain archaeology is the purpose of the great *stūpa* at Mathurā, according to tradition one "created by the gods."[36] The simplest explanation is that the Jains borrowed this form of mortuary commemoration from the Buddhists or shared the idiom with them. However, given that Buddhist *stūpas* are so closely associated with the physical remains of the Buddha and other great teachers and that there can be found no emphasis on the cremation of Mahāvīra, let alone the distribution of his remains, in the Jain *āgama*, a possible connection between Jainism and relics remains obscure.[37]

Walters interprets the division of relics at the Buddha's death and the Buddhist promotion of a cult centring on *stūpas* as part of the imperial process (Walters 1997: 177). Unquestionably, as he points out, Buddhist culture from early times seems to have built up a close connection between relics, location, and narrative. In early Jainism, by contrast, there seems to be no early biography of Mahāvīra prior to the commentary literature on the *Āvaśyaka Sūtra* which associates him with miracles at particular locations, and no postfuneral process described through which a network of relic-possessing holy places could be validated, the *Kalpa Sūtra* simply describing how on the night of the *tīrthaṅkara*'s death there appeared a planet like a heap of ashes (Jacobi 1884: 266). It might then be asked whether the absence of any description of the division of Mahāvīra's relics at the end of the *Kalpa Sūtra*, taken in conjunction with a prophecy of decline built into this text's description of his death, might in fact have some bearing on Jainism's ambiguous status as an imperial religion.

There is the occasional hint in the *āgama* texts that there was some sort of familiarity on the part of the Jains with the implications of a cult of relics and at the same time an unwillingness to engage fully with it. So the account of the renunciation of the future heretic Jamāli in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra* (partially reproduced in the similar account of Megha's renunciation in *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra* ch. 1) describes how the

36 See Leoshko (1999: 333–334) for the sense and context of the expression "constructed by the gods" (*devanirmita*).

37 The one obvious early inscriptional reference to an appparent Jain relic cult can be found in Khāravela's Hāthīgumphā inscription, where there occur the expressions *kāyanisīdīyā* and *arahatanisīdīyā* (Kant 2000: 19 and 20). These have been interpreted as signifying "the depository of the relic of the arhat" (Thapar 2002: 213); see Kant (2000: 69) for the rendering "Relic Memorial." However, the similarity of the form *nisīdi(yā)* to the later *nisidhī*, used of hero stones erected in honor of dead warriors and ascetics, suggests the possibility that the reference here is to some sort of commemorative monument rather than a physical relic. See Balbir (1993: 133) for late canonical and commentarial narrative references to funerary monuments and relics in the context of the first Jina Ṛṣabha.

distraught mother of the renunciant kept some of her son's hair as a memento, worshiping it and then enshrining it in a casket so that, as it were, she might be able to see him repeatedly (*apacchime darisaṇe*) on festival days.[38] This might well be a semi-ironic allusion or parallel to the story of the hair-relic of Gautama given to the merchants Trapuṣa and Bhallika found in the developed legend of the Buddha (Strong 2001: 78–79 and 164).

MONASTERY, COURT, AND KNOWLEDGE IN EARLY JAINISM

The historian Daud Ali has demonstrated how there gradually emerged in post-Vedic and early imperial north Indian urban society a court aesthetic and culture which foregrounded the communicative power of outward marks and appearances, in Foucaultian terms a "technology of the self," and was most obviously exemplified within early *kāvya* and the *Kāma Sūtra*. He further argues for the location of two apparently disparate realms of activity, the aforementioned courtly culture and another technology of the self, Buddhist monastic discipline, on the same ideological continuum as inversions of each other. Thus the courtly preoccupation with external signs as emblematic of states of pleasurable being can be held to find its contrastive counterpart in the Buddhist insistence on the suppression of such signs as symptomatic of the erotic and thus worldly suffering (Ali 1998).

Ali relies on Buddhist evidence alone as representative of renunciatory culture, drawing in particular on those parts of the Pāli Vinaya which prescribe correct monastic behavior with regard to activities like bodily adornment and interaction with the opposite sex. The Jain *cheda sūtras*, which contain basic prescriptions for ascetic behavior and etiquette, can furnish comparable evidence. Thus the *Niśītha Sūtra*, albeit perhaps not as early as sometimes projected (Ohira 1994a: 1), contains a substantial number of rules which prescribe expiations (*prāyaścitta*) for any monk attempting to effect external modifications of the body through ornamentation or cleansing (e.g., 1.42–56, 2.21, 3.45–68, 4.64–117, 15.19–154). The same text inevitably also warns

38 *Bhagavatī Sūtra* 9.33, p. 449: *tae ṇam sa Jamālissa khattiyakumārassa māyā haṃsalakkhaṇeṇaṃ paḍasādaeṇam aggakese paḍicchai, paḍicchittā surabhiṇā gaṃdhodaeṇaṃ pakkhālei, pakkhālettā aggehiṃ varehiṃ gaṃdhehiṃ mallehiṃ acceti, accettā suddhe vatthe baṃdhai, baṃdhittā rayaṇakaraṃḍagaṃsi pakkhivati, pakkhivittā hāra-vāridhāra-sinduvāra-chiṇṇamuttavalippagāsāiṃ suyaviyogadūsahāiṃ aṃsūiṃ viṇimmuyamāṇī-viṇimmuyamāṇī evaṃ vayāsī-esa naṃ amhaṃ Jamālissa khattiyakumārassa bahūsu tihīsu ya pavvaṇīsu ya ussavesu ya jannesu ya chaṇesu ya apacchime darisaṇe bhavissatīti kaṭṭu ūsīsagamūle ṭhaveti.*

The equivalent passage in *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra* 1, p. 50 is as follows: *tate ṇaṃ tassa Mehassa kumārassa māyā mahariheṇaṃ haṃsalakkhaṇeṇaṃ paḍagasāḍaeṇaṃ aggakese paḍicchati, paḍicchittā surabhiṇā gaṃdhodaeṇaṃ pakkhāleti, pakkhālittā sarasenaṃ gosīsacandaṇeṇaṃ caccāo dalayati, dalayittā seyāe pottīe baṃdhati, baṃdhittā rayaṇasamuggayaṃsi pakkhivati, pakkhivittā maṃjūsāe pakkhivati, pakkhivittā hāra-vāridhāra-siṃduvāra-chinnamuttāvalippagāsāiṃ aṃsūṇi viṇimmuyamāṇī royamāṇī kaṃdamāṇī vilavamāṇī evaṃ vadāsī-esa ṇaṃ amhaṃ Mehassa kumārassa abbhudaesu ya ussavesu ya pasavesu ya tihīsu ya chaṇesu ya jannesu ya pavvaṇīsu ya apacchime darisaṇe bhavissai tti kaṭṭu ussīsāmūle ṭhaveti.*

against contact with women (8.1–13) and, in particular, with kings, their courts and harems, sternly forbidding the receiving of alms from them (4. 1–15, 9). Rather than use the *cheda sūtras* to amplify Ali's valuable thesis, I would like to adduce two sources, underutilized even by those working in the field of Jainism, which strike me as potentially relevant witnesses to a Jain awareness of a simultaneous ideological connection and opposition between courtly and renunciatory cultures at the beginning of the Common Era.

The *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra*, the sixth *aṅga* of the Śvetāmbara *āgama*, is a collection of stories and parables which, irrespective of the commentarial claim that it provided an exemplary textual means of effecting control over the monastic community, seems through its often elaborate stylistic format to be directed not just toward ascetics but also toward a broader audience familiar with the presuppositions of courtly aesthetics.[39] The first chapter, *Ukkhitta*, which tells the story of Prince Megha, is most likely an insertion perhaps effected not long before the final redaction of the scriptures.[40] It highlights and to some extent resolves the marked contrast between the court and the world of renunciation, the two kingdoms of later Jain description (Dundas 1991: 179–180).

Megha is brought up in his father Śreṇika's palace within an atmosphere redolent of the luxurious style of urban culture prevalent in the early Common Era. Attended from childhood by typically exotic inhabitants of an idealized imperial *sabhā* such as hunchbacks, dwarves, and barbarian and tribal women, Megha's education is described as consisting of mastery of the seventy-two social skills, similar to the sixty-four enumerated in the *Kāma Sūtra*, which included understanding the external characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*) of women, men, elephants, cattle, parasols, *cakras*, royal staffs, swords, jewels, and money. He becomes versed in the eighteen regional (*desī*) languages, expert in martial arts, and masters all branches of learning in terms of their outer form, meaning, and practice (*suttao ya atthao ya karaṇao*) (cf. Bollée 2002: 185–188 and 191–208 and Roth 1994).

Nonetheless, despite the pleasures of the court and cohabitation with his eight wives, Megha becomes drawn to the Jain ascetic life after hearing Mahāvīra preach and is resolved on renouncing the world. He is advised by the *tīrthaṅkara* to be a warrior by putting on the armor of firmness, destroying the enemies which are the eight types of karma by means of meditation, and conquering the armies of the afflictions (*parīsaha*). Megha is praised by the great teacher for having been immune to the passions while living in the court. Just as a lotus is not stained by water, so Megha, who had grown among pleasures, was not stained by passions.

After initiation Megha is obliged as a junior monk to sleep at the door of the monastic lodging house, and so endures a sleepless night "like hell" (*niraya-paḍirūviyaṃ*) because of the continual coming and going of his fellow monks to relieve themselves in the course of their learned discussions and recitations.[41] The disenchanted Megha reflects on the fact that when he was a prince the Jain monks would approach him as the son of King Śreṇika, converse with him about intellectual matters and honor him, whereas now that he has become a monk they no longer do so. He resolves to leave the monastic world because of its many discomforts, but Mahāvīra, who knows what has disturbed him during the night, informs Megha of the difficulties he experienced in his previous existences as a mighty and fearless forest elephant and so dissuades him.

Various areas of ascetic life here both echo and are at variance with courtly culture. Megha's status as a member of the princely class and exponent of martial arts is transformed into the more profound role of spiritual warrior. He is consigned to sleep at the door of the monastery as if he were a doorkeeper to the inner chambers of the palace where he had previously lived. The contact which the monks make with Megha as they go in and out the building, rubbing against the various parts of his body and covering him with dust, is described as if it were the equivalent of the massaging and oiling of his body by his eight wives in the court. Massaging of the body is of course expressly forbidden to monks (*Nisītha Sūtra* 1.2–8, 4.64, 7.13). Megha's nostalgia for his earlier life of comfort in which he was honored by monks in the royal *sabhā* can only be read against the grain of the statements in the *cheda sūtras* which enjoin ascetics not to enter into relationships with members of royal households. In this depiction the world of asceticism can only be appreciated in terms of its opposite, the world of the royal court.[42]

Ali understandably concentrates on the *Kāma Sūtra* as exemplifying the various facets of courtly culture in the urban world of north India during the early Common Era. Another potentially fruitful text for developing an understanding of a Jain interaction with this world is the *Aṅgavijjā*, "Knowledge of the Parts of the Body," an anonymous Prākrit work of substantial extent ostensibly devoted to the science of prognostication through the observation of external bodily modifications, that is to say "signs."[43] Moti Chandra, who provides an introduction to Puṇyavijaya's edition,

39 For the title, see Balbir (1994a: 242–243) and also (1994a: 253) for the employment of parables as characteristic of religious traditions polemically engaging with alternative, sometimes dominant discourses. Schubring (1978) gives a summary of the contents.

40 Schubring (1978: 8–9) refers to an original eighteen chapters of the *Jñātadharmakathāḥ Sūtra*, giving this text a similar numerical structure to the eighteen books of the *Mahābhārata* and the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

41 *Jñātṛdharmakathāḥ Sūtra* p. 57: *tate naṃ samaṇā niggaṃthā puvvarattā-varattakālasamayaṃsi vāyaṇāe pucchaṇāe pariyaṭṭaṇāe dhammāṇuogaciṃtāe ya uccārassa ya pāsavaṇassa ya atigacchamāṇā ya niggacchamāṇā ya appegatiyā Meham kumāraṃ hatthehiṃ saṃghaṭṭeṃti, evaṃ pāehiṃ sīse poṭṭe kāyaṃsi appegatiyā olaṃḍeṃti, appegatiyā palaṃḍeṃti, appegatiyā pāyarayareṇuguṃḍiyaṃ kareṃti.*

42 For another example of this type of story, see *Jñātādharmakathāḥ* ch. 5, which concludes with the story of King Śailaka who after renouncing becomes lax in behavior because of his royal background.

43 The only reasonably critical assessment of this text is by Schubring (1977: 476–484). See also Jagdishcandra Jain (1992: 153–163). As a text dealing with the hidden connections between entities, the *Aṅgavijjā* might well be examined in the light of the insights about ancient correlative systems provided by Farmer, Henderson, and Witzel (2000: 69–76). It remained notoriously difficult well into the medieval period. For an admiring mention of an *ācārya*'s ability to interpret the "impenetrable" (*duḥsādha*) *Aṅgavijjā*, see the sixteenth-century *Bṛhatposālikapaṭṭāvalī* p. 27, l.12.

locates the compilation of the *Aṅgavijjā* in the fourth century CE, although with a text of such uncertain provenance alternative datings are inevitable.[44]

The texts dealing with the science of prognostication as supposedly taught by Mahāvīra are deemed to have been included in the lost twelfth *aṅga* of the canon. The *Aṅgavijjā* itself is frequently, although not invariably,[45] situated in the *prakīrṇaka* or "mixed" section of the Śvetāmbara *āgama*, and its obviously ambiguous status no doubt derives from its controversial subject matter. There is inevitably a wide range of early scriptural prohibitions against the practice of divination by Jain ascetics, for it must have smacked of the Vedic world of magical healing from which the Jains, like the early Buddhists, initially sought to distance themselves. Such prohibitions may be taken as a tacit admission that prognostication was indeed practiced, and while the *Aṅgavijjā* may in fact be drawing on a style of science originally developed in the Greek world, its existence and survival are testimony to its significance.

The contents of the *Aṅgavijjā* very much convey the flavor of a milieu which is not exclusively Jain but at times intersects with brahmin culture. Thus it is stipulated (ch. 3) that those pupils wishing to study the *Aṅgavijjā* must come from the top three *varṇas*. The moral and physical virtues required are, however, not dissimilar to those required for Jain ascetic initiation (*dīkṣā*), and accordingly a student of the text must have no contact with the sort of things that a monk should avoid, namely, garlands, ornaments, fish, meat, honey, curds, etc. The general ascetic virtues are associated with knowledge of the *Aṅgavijjā*, as are the higher forms of knowledge of Jain epistemology.

The opening of the *Aṅgavijjā* links the eightfold knowledge of outward causes (*nimitta*), in other words omens, to the beginningless and endless knowledge revealed by the omniscient ones. Such knowledge of omens inevitably leads to knowledge of past, present, and future states (1.1–3). It is the body which reveals all external omens; as rivers descend to the ocean, so external omens are located in the ocean of the body. The body is itself said to be preeminent among external ominous entities as omniscience is among types of knowledge; a man who is not a Jina may become such a being on studying it, for it is the Jinas who have revealed all the innumerable modifications (*bhāva*) on the body of man (1.5–6, 16). The *Aṅgavijjā* is thus not simply a manual for those wishing to gain expertise in the arts of divination. Just as Jainism is a discipline of the body through its insistence on the practice of austerity, so too is divination as treated in the *Aṅgavijjā* a science of the body through its interpretation of the signs which physicality evinces. Both, if followed correctly, will lead to omniscience.

As a textual entity, the *Aṅgavijjā* is markedly representative of early Jainism's highly developed classificatory tendency, a reflex of its great teachers' claims to omniscience, and is effectively an almost obsessive attempt to read and control the world by providing an inventory of everything within it.[46] The enterprise of the

44 Moti Chandra's introduction to Puṇyavijaya's edition, p. 30. For differing views, see Pingree 1981: 75 and Schubring 1977: 455.

45 Wiles 2000 does not list the *Aṅgavijjā* at all in his survey of the canon.

46 See Conte 1994: 68 for the encyclopaedic tendency in the early Roman Empire as a possible manifestation of anxiety.

Aṅgavijjā is quasi-encyclopaedic in its systematized zeal, with the basic twofold structure of reality as envisaged by Jainism, living creatures with souls (*jīva*) and those things which are inanimate (*ajīva*) (1.35), being fragmented into a vast number of component parts which are then reclassified into groups and presented as, at least potentially, an endlessly meaningful set of phenomena. The whole world is approached from one sole perspective, namely, its capacity to signal meaning different from that which it ostensibly denotes.

While there is no evidence of total state control of divination in early India as there was elsewhere in the ancient world (Lloyd 2002: ch. 2), predictive enquiry of the sort described in the *Aṅgavijjā* seems to have represented in the context of court discourse a means of generating and highlighting the multiple layers of knowledge necessary for imperial administration. Schubring (1977: 483) characterized the *Aṅgavijjā* as "bürgerlich," no doubt because it often breathes the same air of leisured eroticism as the *Kama Sūtra*, as, for example, in its classification of women and description of prediction based on movements of the eye. However, its detailed treatment of topics such as military prognostication (chs. 47–50) could only have been targeted at the court of the *vijigīṣu*, the king who is ritually obliged to expand his kingdom at the expense of his neighbor. In particular, the *Aṅgavijjā*'s large-scale taxonomy of the contents of the world displays an obvious kinship with the organizational methods of the *Arthaśāstra*, such listings and itemizings being an adjunct means of providing the stable authority which underpinned political control (cf. Patton 1995: 350).

With the *Aṅgavijjā* we can see Jainism attempting to align itself with the world of courtly power and luxury. While this may not have been enough to establish it as an imperial religion before the fifth century CE, it provides a obvious foreshadowing of the role which at a later period many Jain monks were to assume as royal preceptors and court scholars.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing may have caused some surprise to those used to seeing the development of Jainism presented in almost exclusively doctrinal terms. While not neglecting the teachings, I have instead tried in the bulk of the chapter to employ as a partially unifying theme the manner in which the renunciatory path originally followed by "bondless" (*nirgrantha*) ascetics and their lay supporters, which has come to be called Jainism, endeavored in the period between the Mauryan and Gupta empires to articulate itself both explicitly and implicitly in quasi-imperial terms, even though it cannot in actuality be envisaged as having been to any developed extent an imperially sponsored religion. The designation of Jainism by its adherents today as a "world religion" because of its ethical universalism might be regarded as a lingering trace of this ancient perspective. As I remarked at the outset, what Jainism looked like as a socioreligious totality in the early stages of its evolution must in many respects remain open to speculation, as must other more specific questions, such as, for example, the reason for the lack of any obvious early Jain presence in the Gandhāra region equivalent

to that of Buddhism during the period under consideration in this volume.[47] However, I do hope to have shown that Williams's characterization of early Jainism as apparently mired in a "dark age" defying interpretation was unduly pessimistic and that it should instead be treated as embedded in a larger socioreligious world of interacting ideologies, of which it was both a product and conditioning factor. Just as classical Indian culture can be regarded as having emerged in the period "between the empires," so too can classical Jainism.

47 The *cheda sutras* set Mathurā as the northwesterly limit for Śvetāmbara ascetic travel. See Ohira 1994a: 15.

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16

Naming and Social Exclusion

The Outcast and the Outsider

Aloka Parasher-Sen

The existence of the "other" in any form opens up a rift and this has to be located in language.—Michel de Certeau[1]

If someone asks you what your caste is, you say you are a Chokhamelā or Harijan; but you do not say you are a Mahār. Nobody changes his name unless there is need for it. But there is no meaning in adopting a name like Chokhamelā or Harijan. The stench of the old name will stick to the new and you will be forced to change your name continually. Then why not change it permanently?—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar[2]

INTRODUCTION

Both of these quotes set the tone of discussion in this chapter. The first by Certeau interjects on how "topography of proper names" emerges so as to normalize a process of distinction based initially on speech that had to be isolated to affirm fundamentally that it was barbaric and therefore, represented chaos. At stake here was creating a discourse of control since the excluded was invariably seen as generating deviance in many ways. And since there was a continual challenge to stability, it has been ultimately argued by Certeau that "no determinate value can be linguistically attached to these names in any stable way" (Certeau 1988: 256). Thus it follows that names go on changing, making such groups respond to a number of names that are but necessarily typecast and prearranged in a certain order. However, we must finally

[1] Certeau (1988: 255). He writes this in the context of the "possessed woman" or "mentally ill woman" as the "other" in the discourses of religious/demonological knowledge and psychiatric/medical knowledge respectively (Certeu 1988: 247–248).

[2] This is part of the 1936 speech to the Mahār Conference cited in (Zelliot 1992: 12). It may be noted that in this quote whereas Chokhamela, that refers to the well-known medieval *bhakti* saint from Maharashtra belonging to the Mahār or untouchable caste, is a proper name, Harijan is a more recent terminology popularized as a name and designation after its initial use by Mahatma Gandhi to refer to the so-called untouchable collective as the "children of god."

submit, as Ambedkar had recognized, that the names thus given stick, resulting in a pigeon-holing of population, to some of whom these names were not their self-perception. To move away from such a process of naming one had to opt out of the system and adopt an alternative naming pattern that was relatively more inclusive.

Social exclusion has been much written about in the past, but not in the context of how naming as a process interjected to define linkage between those who named and those who were named. One would not like to begin with a simplistic binary distinction between the two. Binary contrasts do not permit looking at complexities of social relations, even though the criteria for defining exclusion in early India may ostensibly seem to have been singularly definite and unchanging. Looking critically at naming in the present context of our discussion provides space for understanding the multiple nodes of social exclusion, each in turn, throwing up a series of other names apparently synonymous to each other, yet different in their localization in time and space. This sort of flowering out from a strong linear stem enables us to pattern and map the complex relationship between hierarchy and diversity in the social landscape of the subcontinent during some of the most critical centuries in its evolution that has been defined as the period "between the empires" in the present context.

Earlier scholarship had looked at the plethora of names in ancient Indian texts, often running into repetitive mechanical lists, as the inability of the early writers to record perfectly the observable. An inability, it was suggested, that stemmed from the fact that the writer had set himself apart and defined the rules that would not permit contact, speech, or any kind of interaction with the socially excluded groups. This fundamentally flawed assumption put forth by some scholars naturally took for granted that it was prejudice and ignorance that provides us today with a corrupt data base on which we can, with great difficulty, build our theories of historical explanation. From the modern perspective, and since history, Dirks (2002) reminds us in his recent publication, is also a sign of the modern, it is true that the source on which we build our narratives of social history is clearly not ideal. And, it is for this reason that one has to move into the domain of language and meaning for a finer grasp of material to enliven historical perceptions. It must of course be stated at the outset that both historical explanations and historical perceptions are built on discourses of knowledge that divulge the interplay between asserting power, protecting identities, and claiming truth but in decidedly different ways.

The outcast and the outsider represent critical junctures of subordination, marginality, and accommodation on the social fabric of the *varṇa-jāti* system. The former were undoubtedly oppressed, and their histories were entwined in complex ways to the trajectory of power and domination in early India. In the present context we focus particularly on those groups that were ritually isolated, making them sharply accentuated vis-à-vis the caste society as a whole. They were necessarily part of the caste system but always on its margins. The latter as broadly understood in the present context were a variety of outsiders who came into contact with the mainstream caste society but were initially defined as being excluded from the dominant perception of the Self and regarded as uncivilized. They were categorically considered culturally inferior, though not always oppressed or permanently excluded. Over time, some came to be accommodated as both dominant and subordinate castes. For this reason it needs to be stressed that though both subordination of ritually impure castes and the

exclusion of the so-called barbaric communities were initially located outside the formal system of social stratification based on the concept of *varṇāśramadharma*,[3] they were always interacting with it. It is well recognized that the exploitation of subordinate groups began with their economic dependence, but their segregation was accomplished over historical time through the effective use of the rules of purity and pollution that in fact got entrenched as a defining characteristic of the *varṇa-jāti* system. The marginality of barbaric and foreign groups, on the other hand, has to be traced in terms of the very genesis, transformation, and growth of the *varṇa-jāti* system on the subcontinent.

As is often the case, it is difficult to find exact English equivalents for Sanskrit words and the term "outcast" is no exception. The closest is seen in the use of the word *apasada* in the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, but one that is not used very often to describe the social groups that are referred to in this verse. It reads thus: "(Children) begotten by a priest (in women) in the three (lower) classes, or by a king (in women) in the two (lower) classes, or by a commoner (in women) in the one (lower) class—all six are traditionally regarded as outcasts" (*MDh* X.10). In this context the word *apasada* is translated as "outcast" (Doniger and Smith 1991: 235). Manu goes on to specify the names of some of these outcasts that we shall detail later. However, at a more general level the various meanings of the English word "outcast" have been given as *jātibhraṣṭā, jātibahiskṛta, jātibāhya, jātihīna, hīnajāti, jātipatita, varṇabhraṣṭa, varṇahīna, hīnavarṇa, varṇāpeta, lokavāhya*, and so on. In a more direct sense it is taken to denote *caṇḍāla, apasada, vivarṇa, nīca, nīcajāti, nyagjāti, antyajātīya, adhamajātīya, adhamavarṇa, adhamācāra, ācārahīna*, and so on (Monier-Williams 1851: 559–560). Variously, these terms could be loosely translated as those expelled from society, those at the lowest end of the *jāti-varṇa* hierarchy, those that are the outside *jātis* and *varṇas* or have fallen from that status, those without proper *dharma*, or those that do not follow the rules laid down, and so on. "Outcast" has thus commonly come to be used in this rather general sense. Even more general is the understanding of the term "outsider" that in the English language must necessarily be considered synonymous with the word "foreigner," "a person born or of and from another country," an "alien" (Little and Onions 1974: 734). In finding a close literal equivalent in Sanskrit we come across the words *videśī, paradeśī*, etc. (Monier-Willams 1899: 284). These are used in early literature to essentially denote those people who come from outside a certain given locality or region. *Deśa* was understood here in a rather circumscribed way and not to mean an entire country. This connotation is further expanded to indicate one who comes from far-off lands (outlandish) through words such as *dūradeśīya, paradeśīya, dūradeśavasi, dūravasi*, etc. (Monier-Williams 1851: 560). But it is only through the use of the word *mleccha*, in its various forms, that a sense of difference, fear, and incomprehensible outlandish behavior is conveyed to

3 This therefore means that the śūdras as the fourth *varṇa* shall not be discussed here primarily due to the fact that historical studies have clearly shown that over time and region, social groups, especially ruling elites, called the śūdras cannot be considered to have been in a subordinate and oppressed condition. For changes in the concept of śūdra, see for the ancient period Sharma (1980) and for the early medieval period Jaiswal (1979–80: 37–44).

explain more pointedly their exclusion at various levels. The most common meaning given to this word in the modern dictionaries is that of "foreigner," though one must hastily add that it is never given as the only meaning and often listed only as a secondary meaning. In fact, a more integrated and essential meaning of the word *mleccha* must include it to mean "barbarian" and "non-Aryan" (Monier-Williams 1899: 837; Childers 1976: 247), and both these connotations allude to inhabitants living on the subcontinent and sometimes in close proximity to the people using it to distinguish themselves from others. Several extended meanings developed for the word *mleccha*, and in its most general sense it came to refer to "unintelligent" and "ignorant" people (Parasher 1991: 42–47). From the Brahmanical point of view, however, the most specific, at the same time open definition that we get for them is once again from the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* as follows: "All those castes who are excluded from the world of those who were born from the mouth, arms, thigh, and feet (of the primordial Man) are traditionally regarded as aliens, whether they speak barbarian languages or Aryan languages" (*MDh* X.45). The word *dasyu* was used in this context to describe the aliens. This must necessarily be contrasted with what in the same text cited above described as the outcasts, namely those born out of the twice-born but not regulated as per the laws set by *dharma*. In the present context therefore, outcast and more particularly outsider, as part of the expanded title of this chapter, have been used for convenience to indicate the broad direction in which this chapter leads us.

For the purpose of brevity we shall focus here only on the early Brahmanic notions, terminologies, and names as applied to the *antyas*[4] and the *mlecchas*.[5] It is often thought that the sole term available to describe the outcasts or, those commonly referred to as the untouchable communities, was *aspṛśya*[6] but this was not always the case as several generic names defining such attributes were used frequently, and all of these generic names were literally meant to describe the "last born" or "those who end up at the bottom." Each of them of course were simultaneously also known by their specific caste (*jāti*) names through which the particular nature of their segregation and vocations were described. On the other hand, the pejorative term *mleccha* is indeed commonly translated as barbarian, but this was a term used on occasion to address groups of foreigners or tribes, each of who also had their own ethnic names by which they were simultaneously identified and described. Thus, though the common denominator of clubbing together the outcast and outsider was their exclusion as articulated in the Brahmanical discourse, it would be inappropriate to consider them being excluded on the same plane. In fact, references to them from the earliest texts make it clear that they were described with different terminologies, and this is why

[4] One of several such terms like *antyaja*, *antyayoni*, that first occur in the post-Vedic Dharmasūtra literature.

[5] Known for the first time in the Vedic context of the Brahmana texts. In Pāli and Prākrit it occurs as *milakkha* or *milakkhu* prolifically used in the Piṭaka literature for the first time.

[6] The exact literal equivalent for "untouchable" in Sanskrit is *aspṛśya*, and this occurs relatively late in Indian Dharmaśāstra literature, roughly between the third and sixth centuries CE, but it is not very popular in the non-Dharmaśāstra literature to describe subordinate and ritually impure castes.

looking more closely at the process of naming becomes interesting for critical scrutiny. The core of this chapter depends on examples from literature specially focusing on three important texts spanning the period under discussion—the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, and the *Amarakoṣa*. Broadly, they can be located into the early, middle, and late phases of the period from the Mauryan to Gupta rule in much of northern and northwestern India. In terms of the knowledge system, they represent the same worldview, but the descriptive content in each of them varies and this is important to emphasize upon as it also reflects on the changing perception of the excluded groups over this period.

OUTCAST

Prior to the compilation of the *Arthaśāstra* there is considerable literary evidence that provides references to names as designations for social groups that were generally understood as excluded from the mainstream society of the times. As a background to the present discussion it would be worthwhile to first identify the nature of material on names that is available in these early texts. This can be classified into two broad categories: general designations as blanket terms that refer to the outcasts and outsiders and the more specific caste, subcaste, and tribal names. To elaborate on this further we first take a close look at the overarching terminology ostensibly meant to subsume many of the names categorized by us for convenience under the label "outcasts" followed in the next section by those available for outsiders. In the case of the former it is only in the Dharmasūtra literature that we initially come across such terms like *anta* (*ĀpDh* I.3.9.15), *antya* (*GDh* IV.23), *antyayoni* (*VaDh* XVI.30), *bāhya* (*ĀpDh* I.3.9.18), *antyāvasāyin* (*VaDh* XVIII.3), and *antayajas*. Indications from within these texts suggest that these post-Vedic terms had a common connotation referring to polluting and segregated groups. Thus Gautama considers the *antya* as the "vilest of persons and states." Haradatta (on *GDh* IV.23), his commentator, identifies this with the Caṇḍāla. Āpastamba's above-cited reference in fact refers to *anta* as part of a composite name—*antaścaṇḍālam*—one who lived at the end of the village. In the same text *bāhya* too has the same meaning, to which is added that there was a cessation of Vedic study when he entered the village. Haradatta gives a more specific explanation on this term, namely, that it referred to the *ugras* and *niṣādas* (Buhler 1879–82: ii: 34 ft. 18). Some of these generic names, as in the case of the *antyāvasāyin*, developed into individual caste names (*VaDh* XVIII.3). According to Kane (1930–60: II, ii: 69–70), *anta* and *antyajas* were terms generally applied to all of the lowest castes. For this early period R. S. Sharma suggests that these generic names applied to the whole population of tribal villages condemned as "outcasts" rather than to people who were excluded from the old established settlements of the *āryas* (Sharma 1980: 140–141). Vasiṣṭha (*VaDh* XVI.30), however, leaves no room for ambiguity while distinguishing between the *antyayonis* and good śūdras, stating that the former could appear as witnesses only in their own judicial cases. An important statement on this distinction is from the grammarians of early India. Patañjali (I.475) explains a phrase from Pāṇini (II.4.10)—*śūdrānām anirvasitānām*—which specifies that there were those śūdra communities that could be associated with and those that were impure and lived

outside the community or country. In this context it is suggested by Patañjali that Pāṇini seems to have included the Caṇḍāla and the *mṛtapa* in the list of those śūdras who lived outside towns and villages and contact with whom permanently defiled the vessels of the *brāhmaṇas*. It is further suggested that they were distinguished by their *apapātra* status as indicated by their use of "discarded bowls." Some scholars see this reference as the first unquestioned allusion to the so-called untouchables in literature. (Sharma 1980: 138–139). Nonetheless, each of the above terms denoting outcasts can be loosely understood to describe what in later periods came to be subsumed under the term *aspṛśya* (*VS* V.104, XLIV.9; *KS* 433, 783) translated as "untouchable."

However, it needs to be recognized that, at the same time, the distinction between the various kinds of excluded groups, each with their individual names, was diligently maintained from very early times. Vikekanand Jha (Jha 1975: 14–15) in his thesis on the Untoucables lists all these groups that have been mentioned in the Vedic context to suggest that individual names of peoples were known but not as caste names. Thus in his view some like the Niṣāda, Kaivarta, Dāśa Carmanna, and Malaga can be considered forebearers of several "castes" that during a later period came to be treated as untouchables. Similarly, others mentioned in the Vedic context like the Rathakāra, Kṣattṛ, and Sūta were considered respectable people, while the Vaidehas were considered bearers of Brahmanical culture in the east and the Āyogavas were known for the performance of the *aśvamedha* along with the king. The really despicable people in the early Vedic texts were the Caṇḍāla and Paulkasa who, as objects of spite and abhorrence, were considered the lowest ritually and socially. The Māgadhas for the reason that their land was imperfectly Brahmanized were also considered of very low in status. However, in the subsequent period, as manifested in the Dharmasūtras, all these names came to be explained in terms of their origins as part of a *varṇasaṃkara* or "mixture of *varṇas*" (see tables 16.1, 16.2). This was largely an exercise facilitating initially a group's induction in the *varṇa* order and recording the lawgiver's evaluation of its social status. The logic of how these groups were formed was delineated in a rather artificial and mechanical way, and it soon developed contradictions and according to Jha broke down even as a meaningful theoretical exercise (Jha 1970: 273–288). However, it is important to emphasize that later-day law writers continued to use these names in various contexts to define their social and ritual status. The Dharmasūtras thus started the process of punctiliously giving origins of the so-called mixed castes and assigned particular places to the names that were already known in the earlier Vedic literature. But they do not agree about the number, names, classification, and even the details of their derivation. It is striking, however, to note that there is an absence of this list in the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*, which can probably be explained if we agree with the view that this was the earliest of the Dharmasūtras (Olivelle 1999: xxix–xxxiii), and therefore, had not yet formalized this list in the same way that the other Dharmasūtras had done. These mixed castes were essentially derived from being born of *anuloma* (hypergamous) unions or *pratiloma* (hypogamous) unions, and one notes that in the Dharmasūtras, the largest number are described in by Baudhāyana, followed by Gautama and then by Vasiṣṭha.[7] Both categories were looked down upon

[7] Literally *anuloma* means "in accordance with the direction of the hair" and *pratiloma* means "against the flow of the hair." *GDh* lists 11 (5 *anuloma*, 6 *pratiloma*);

but not treated on an equal footing. The Dharmasūtra of Vasiṣṭha (*VaDh* XVIII.7), however, expresses the frank view that it is in fact difficult to assign any particular derivation to groups of people, and that men's subcastes could only be known through their actions and occupations, but none of these early legal writers mention the occupation of these groups. Another striking feature of the process of naming for this early period was that there was no total agreement on explaining the origin of all these mixed castes, but in the overall ordering of names it was uniformly recognized that a mixture of the *brāhmaṇa* and śūdra blood was especially polluting and all others mixtures between *varṇas* were placed at various scales in the social hierarchy. A significant point that is often ignored is that the number of so-called mixed castes always exceeded the number of untouchable or outcast groups defined in this way. A few of them from these mixed unions were indeed degraded to this status, but a good many were not. This has an important bearing on not only defining the outcast and the outsider but also in understanding the interrelation between caste hierarchy and diversity on the subcontinent.

The essential criterion that distinguished these various mixed castes was the nature of their pollution, and this is also explicated in the Dharmasūtras. Briefly, the most potent pollution was associated with the Caṇḍāla, who was sometimes mentioned along with Śvapāka (Pāṇini XV.3.118). First it was their very sight, speech (*ĀpDh* II.1.2.8), and proximity (*ĀpDh* I.3.9.15) that were tabooed. Later, commensal (*BDh* II.2.4.14; *VaDh* XX.17), and connubial (*BDh* II.2.4.12–14; *VaDh* XXIII.40–41) restrictions vis-à-vis them were put into place. The Pulkasa was held in low esteem but not considered untouchable, and so also the Carmakāra and Rajaka but whose food could not be partaken by the brahmins (*VaDh* XIV.3). The Naṭa, another later-day untouchable caste, was at present excluded for their loose morals (*BDh* II.2.4.1, 3). Thus varying degrees of pollution and exclusion were attached to different social segments relating at distinct levels to a hierarchical society. While generic names helped distinguish them from the dominant in society, individual group names established the identity of one vis-à-vis the other. The latter needs to be emphasized, as it becomes the core point for discussion, namely, a conscious concern among these early writers to refer to these groups by their specific names reflecting either their ethnic or occupational affiliations rather than grouping them all under the rubric of one well-accepted overarching phrase or term. For this early period we do not have lists of such names being defined by a single generic designation or appellation.

It is against this background that the *Arthaśāstra* instances of naming can be placed. Kauṭilya draws on this early material, but clearly his approach was more mundane. Following the earlier tenor, he too prescribes severe punishments for those having relations with a Śvapāka woman who, along with the Caṇḍāla, had come to be considered the most vile of all outcasts. A śūdra man committing this offence was condemned to become a Śvapāka himself, whereas members of other castes were banned to other lands wearing distinguishing marks on their forehead. In case a

BDh, 14 (4 *anuloma* and 9 *pratiloma*, *parsava* given as another name of *niṣāda* and 2 double mixed castes placed in both); *VaDh*, 6 (1 *anuloma* and 5 *pratiloma*), and *ĀpDh*, 3 (not born of miscegenation but from sins of past life).

Śvapāka man committed the offence of having relations with an Ārya woman there was no option for him but death, while the woman had to have her ears and nose cut off (*AŚ* IV.13.34–35). However, his pragmatic approach is revealed in his concern about defining the socioeconomic role of some of them but without in any way denying their outcast status, as in the case where a Caṇḍāla's well is identified for use only by them (*AŚ* I.14.10) or when they are listed as impure persons (*AŚ* III.19.9–10). In many instances their useful role in society is accentuated in terms of their working at and staying near the crematorium (*AŚ* II.4.23), being engaged in punishing the offenders in criminal cases (*AŚ* II.3.28, IV.7.25–26), and defending new settlements in the countryside. (*AŚ* II.1.6) These instances indicate that the Caṇḍāla was still not totally deemed to be unspeakable, unseeable, or unapproachable. One particular example describes the outcasts as envoys of the king (*AŚ* I.16.14–15). While explaining the duties of these envoys, who were meant to speak out as they were told to even if weapons were raised against them, Kauṭilya notes: "Of them even the lowest born (*antāvasāyin*) are immune from killing; what to speak then of the Brahmins?" (Kangle 1965: II, 37). The *Arthaśāstra* thus sheds greater light on their functions in society wherein the existence of the outcast had to be accepted as a given social reality and accordingly made to fit into an order that an ideal state was meant to adopt. Of all these examples, it is only in one case (*AŚ* II.1.6) that one gets the impression that Caṇḍāla is being referred to as a specific name for a people who, along with the Śabaras and Pulindas, are portrayed as people living on the margins of settled society. Here, they are also listed alongside the Vāgurikas, understood as trappers or hunters, and the Araṇyacara or forest-dwellers, that could be identified by their settlements between the kingdom and its border areas. As those who lived on the outskirts and around the cremation ground (*AŚ* II.4.23), they are also equated with the heretics or *pāṣaṇḍas*, but in a generic sense rather than as a specific name of a people. A problem that we have to continually contend with is the difficulty of clearly identifying when the text used these nomenclatures as a specific name of a group or used them merely as a generic name. We turn to this question later as this seems to be a defining feature of the process of naming in early India, that is, swaying between specificity and flexibility.

Something that is particularly significant in the context of the *Arthaśāstra* is the way this text defines punishments and the laws of inheritance for all social groups together, and in the process rather clear contours of the socially segregated emerge. Clearly punishments even for the ritually impure are now no longer merely based on purificatory penances, as was the dominant trend in the Dharmasūtras (Jha 1970: 281–282). Kauṭilya replaces them with payment of specific amounts of fine. In the case of libel concerning characters among members of the four *varṇas* and the *antāvasāyin* or the lowest born, Kauṭilya prescribes a fine of three *paṇas* that would successively increase by three if the latter was accused by the former and be reduced by two *paṇas* successively if members of the former were at fault (*AŚ* III.18.7). A Caṇḍāla committing the crime of touching an Ārya lady was fined a hundred *paṇas*. This crime among other things was equated with a person feeding a Śākya, Ājivikā, or other heretical (*pāṣaṇḍa*) monks at the rites in honor of the gods, who also had to pay the same amount of fine (*AŚ* III.20.16). Several social groups could act as witnesses only in cases pertaining to their particular caste (*AŚ* III.11.29)—"The King, a Brahmin learned in the Vedas, a village servant, a leper and a wounded man, an outcast, a Caṇḍāla, a person following a despised profession, a blind, deaf, dumb or self invited person, a woman and a king's officer (shall not be cited as witnesses) except in the case of their own groups" (Kangle 1965: II, 228–229). This reference too tends to differentiate Caṇḍāla as the particular name of a community or group from others as indicated by the use of two separate words for the "outcast" and "despised." One group that was particularly despised was that of the Naṭas or Kuśilavas (itinerant actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and professional storytellers or minstrels) who were detested and made to live outside villages because seemingly there was not enough place or "shelter" in the villages for these "outsiders" (*AŚ* II.1.34–35). Accordingly, if they created trouble and obstructions for people or, if there were transgressions by them for excessively taking gifts and receiving praise, they had to pay fines as punishment (*AŚ* IV.1.59–60, 65).

The specificity of naming particular groups is clearest when Kauṭilya describes the inheritance and marriage rules. Reference the general understanding of the term outcast mentioned above, the names of these groups as listed in tables 16.1 and 16.2 clearly indicates that the *Arthaśāstra*, while confirming the origin of some, particularly those of the *anuloma*[8] category (*AŚ* III.7.20–25), adds to the list of *pratiloma* unions by suggesting that they came "into existence because of the transgression of his own duties by the king" (*AŚ* III.7.26–30). The list of the latter increases primarily because Kauṭilya adds to it what are now commonly called the "double mixed" castes that could not emerge in the *anuloma* list, as they were all created in the so-called "reverse order." Kauṭilya refers to these double mixes as the "intermediate castes" (*AŚ* III.7.31–34). One clear message that Kauṭilya stresses in this context is that all of the above must marry within their caste of origin and further follow their own hereditary occupations as per precedence (*AŚ* III.7.36). In reading all these verses together we are finally told, in a rather oblique way, that the Pulkasa, Niṣāda, Vaiṇa, Sūta, Māgadha, Kṣattṛ, and Āyogava were to have "the same special duties as the śūdras, excepting the Caṇḍāla" (*AŚ* III.7.37). This becomes the first clear distinguishable statement that separates particular groups by name from the most polluting of outcasts, namely, the Caṇḍāla, even though unlike him some of them like the Pulkasa, Niṣāda, and Vaiṇa were explained as a result of the double mixed origin. Other "mixed castes" like the Vaidehaka and Rathakāra find a still higher status in this text. The former were differentiated as merchants and traders (*AŚ* IV.2.19) and the latter were specifically stated to be *vaiśya* (*AŚ* III.7.35). In terms of receiving shares in property, some of the mixed castes were differentiated from others. In this case the Sūtas, Māgadhas, and Rathakāras, along with the Vrātyas, were given rights in property if they had a mastery over their profession (*AŚ* III.6.14). Though there is no major departure in the attitudes toward outcast groups in the *Arthaśāstra*, each of the names discussed above get clearly etched so that the differences between them is now visibly marked from the perspective of the dominant discourse. New names too emerge in the process, but the *Arthaśāstra* despite its pragmatism is silent about the specificity of the various occupations these groups were attached to—something that was integral to the way they were named. We have to turn to the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* for these details, namely, the equation of

[8] Kangle (1965: 215) translates *anuloma* and *pratiloma* to mean "right order" sons and "reverse order" sons, respectively.

identity with occupation

Heralding the chapter on castes and the *anuloma* and *pratiloma* unions emanating from them, Manu makes it clear that there are only four *varṇas* with no fifth *varṇa* (*MDh* X.4). Like most Dharmaśāstra writers, Manu specifies that a low caste could be recognized by his name (*MDh* III.9). At the same time, however, Manu is the first law writer to define the outcast as is referred to above. He does go on to specify more narrowly by name the outcast groups in this way: "Three outcasts—an 'Unfit,' (*Āyogava*), a 'Carver' (*Kṣattṛ*), and a 'Fierce' (*Caṇḍāla*) 'Untouchable, ' the lowest of men—are born from a servant 'against the grain.' Three other outcasts are born 'against the grain': from the commoner, the 'Māgadhan' and 'Videhan' castes, and from the ruler, the 'Charioteer' (*Sūta*)" (*MDh* X.16–17, translated Doniger and Smith 1991: 236). Manu's writings also elaborate on the number of double mixed castes names that were not known before (tables 16.1, 16.2, 16.3). Thus apart from the mixture of four *varṇas* that earlier writers had given, a substantial list of names born out of a mixture between the *anuloma* and *pratiloma* castes is now added. Sometimes degraded birth was explained in terms of the intermixture between an already mixed *jāti* and a *varṇa*, as in the case of the son born of a "Hunter" (*Niṣāda*) to a servant (śūdra) woman was a Pulkasa/Pukkasa (*MDh* X.18). Further, another list that according to him was the formation of "confused classes" gives names of castes born out of marriage within the same *varṇas* but who had fallen due to misconduct as men of unorthodox views, called the Vrātyas (table 16.3). To this expansion and specificity of names the other important contribution of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* is to give the vocations of the various mixed castes that sometimes is reflected in the very names that they were addressed by.

Thus writes Manu: "Those that are traditionally regarded as outcasts (born) of the twice-born and as born of degradation should make their living by their innate activities, which are reviled by the twice-born" (*MDh* X.46, translated Doniger and Smith 1991: 241) This interesting section in Manu reflects on the complexity of naming the outcast while associating them with the various occupations they were attached to. For certain castes high on the list of the "mixed castes," this was relatively simple to do. While the Sūta and Māgadha were charioteers and inland traders, respectively, the Vaidehakas were considered guardians of the harem or looking after women and the Ambaṣṭhas were considered medicine men (*MDh* X.47). On the other hand, several names were used to define the outcasts whose occupations were hunting, fishing, or generally associated with the slaughter of animals—for instance, the Niṣāda, Kṣattṛ, Pukkusa, Meda, and Andhra—and marked by their habitation in the wilderness (*MDh* X.48–49). The whole exercise of doing so was perhaps to highlight the specificity of their location in different spatial contexts while noting the similarity of their occupation, particularly since the *Meda* and *Andhra* are new names mentioned for the first time indicating contact with new regions and peoples on the subcontinent. A closely related occupation associated with outcasts was that of the *Veṇas* or *Vaiṇas* (*MDh* X. 49), known for their work based on forest produce like working in reeds for making musical instruments like drums, and the Pāṇḍusopākas, well known as bamboo-workers and basketmakers (*MDh* X. 37). Another set of names was closely related to leatherwork like the Carmavakartin (*MDh* IV.218), Kārāvara (*MDh* X.36), and Dhigvana (*MDh* X. 49). Professional carpentry was associated with the Āyogava

due to his proficiency in woodwork (*MDh* X.48). The Kaivarta or Dāsa came to be known as boatmen (*MDh* X.34).

Caṇḍāla, now more clearly an individual caste name, continued to be also used as a generic term to describe the extreme pollution of certain peoples. The Caṇḍāla had by Manu's time became the paradigmatic Untouchable, as in the verse that excludes him as a potent polluting element that could not watch a priest dine while he partook in the ceremonies for the dead (*MDh* III.239), or forbade a *brāhmaṇa* to have connubial relations and commensal contacts with him (*MDh* XI.176), or still further, a person was merely polluted by his touch (*MDh* V.85). Characterizing the Caṇḍāla in various ways has been elaborated further in the text explaining his complete segregation and untouchable status. This has been detailed in telling us of the prescription of his branding, forbidding his entry into town and village, his vocation as a corpse carrier of people without relatives, executioner of criminals (*MDh* X.55–56), and implicitly, as a hunter and butcher (*MDh* V.131). In most of these descriptions he is described along with the Śvapāka who shared his habitat, vocations, dress, and low ritual and economic status (*MDh* X.51–56). The precariousness of their livelihood meant that they depended on others for their food (*MDh* X.54). In explaining their complete segregation thus, it is specifically stated that the Caṇḍālas along with the Śvapākas should use discarded bowls and that their dwellings should be outside the village settlement. In fact, in delineating the duties of a householder, a *snātaka* is explicitly instructed not to live with people like the Caṇḍāla, the Pulkasa *(Pukkasa)* commonly understood as a hunter or a tribal (*MDh* IV.79). The Pulkasa or Pukkasa still known for his tribal characteristics was explained as the result of the union between a Niṣāda man and a śūdra woman (*MDh* X.18). Whereas these are particular names in this context, in the same verse, defining men of these lowest castes as "those who end up at the bottom" is denoted by an overarching general use of the term *antyāvasāyin* (*MDh* IV.79). However, later in the text the Antyāvāsyins too came to be understood as the name of a separate double mixed caste, namely, as those born of a Caṇḍāla father and a Pulkasa mother (*MDh* X.39); a child, writes Manu, "who haunts the cremation grounds and is despised even by the excluded castes" (translated Doniger and Smith 1991: 240). The phrase used to explain the "excluded" nature of these castes is *bāhya*, literally meaning "outside," emphasizing further in this case the outcast as being doubly excluded, one by the dominant castes and then by the already excluded castes. There is thus a specificity in naming while drawing the origin of some of the most despised and excluded outcasts (like Caṇḍāla, Pukkusa, Śvapāka, Antyāvāsyin) whereas, at the same time, there is also an attempt to put them within an overarching umbrella of a general terminology (*antya, antyāvasāyin, bāhya, Caṇḍāla*) that is neither a proper name nor a community name but simply a descriptive term explaining the location of these groups at the bottom or on the margins of the social hierarchy being elaborated upon. However, in an overall sense it can be seen that there was proliferation of impure groups and therefore, their regional and local character must have been important to highlight in order to identify the nature of their exclusion more specifically.

OUTSIDERS

Hitherto, studies on foreigners to, and tribes living in, the subcontinent have been generally limited by the concern to cull data from a variety of sources and build a framework to understand their political existence, particularly during the post-Mauryan period. These studies do reflect a substantial contact with peoples of foreign origin during the same period that notions of cultural exclusion were being systematized and crystallized. For the outsider, studies on the barbarian, i.e., the *mlecchas* and *milakkhas* as the uncivilized (Thapar 1971; Parasher 1991), point to a clear distinction being maintained between groups that were a part of the Brahmanical society and those totally outside, based on difference of their language, habitation, and behavior as described in the early literature. But there was always a specific parameter within which the use of these terms had to be understood. In case of the outcast we have identified various terms that were used to describe the ritually impure *jātis* during the earliest period of their emergence. In the case of the outsider there are not many terms that specifically address the notion of the uncivilized, though sometimes terms like *asura*, *dāsa*, *dasyu*, *anārya*/*anāriya*, and *vrātya* have been loosely used, in different contextual situations, to also define marginality and exclusion. These can in no sense be considered synonymous to the words *mleccha* or *milakkha*, though they carried with them some elements of the meaning attached to the latter in terms of each of them being understood as either demonic, outlandish, alien, non-*āryan*, or degraded. Another difference with the outcast reflected in the early literature is that the origins of the outsider as *mleccha* are never explained in terms of *śāstra* injunctions but rather, invariably reflected in terms of later mythic allusions to their origin in the epic and puranic literature (table 16.4). In other words, the *mleccha* is never stated to have originated in terms of even a remote link with the *mahāpuruṣa* or primeval man or through the combinations and permutations of the four *varṇas*. On the contrary, it is emphasized through certain myths that their genesis is in relationship to the forest, often conveying disorder, or that they were forces creating disorder by "falling" from duties that had been assigned to them in the hoary imagined past. Thus even though clarity in terms of designating or naming individual social groups as either outcast or outsider may be wanting, the essential ideological separation of the two was fundamental, indicating on the one hand that certain firm rules were in operation and on the other a possibility of opening them up for interpretation especially if identity had to be more specifically established.

Bhattacharya has drawn attention to the fact that apart from the four classifications, each carrying its own identity, the Vedic texts sometimes grouped the three upper *varṇas* as *dvija-jātis* and together contrasted them with the fourth *varṇa*, namely, the śūdras. In other instances, the four *varṇas* were mentioned together and then contrasted with those on the margins of the system and called by various terms like the *antyas*, *antyāvāsin*, etc. (Bhattacharya 1983–84: 2–3). Therefore, it was not always that the four *varṇas* were described as a monolithic whole. This apart, an unusual early reference in the *Nirukta* of Yāska, a text dated to about the seventh century BCE, mentions the four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*) as part of the *pañca jana* or five "tribes."[9] The fifth *jana* was that of the Niṣāda, a well-known autochthonous tribe of the period. That latter, of course, were never known as being part of a *varṇa* though in later Dharmśāstra literature, as discussed above, they did emerge as an untouchable caste (Jha 1977: 67–84). They are also well known in the epic literature as the progenitors of the *mleccha* communities that we shall dwell upon below. It can be argued that this is reflective of a tendency explaining transitory historical processes that affected all social groups and therefore, such unusual ways of describing the four *varṇas* as well as the Niṣādas did not remain permanent or popular. It does, however, throw up the complexity with which the junctures of hierarchy and diversity were played out in different periods of historical time. We turn to elaborate upon this further, beginning with the descriptions during the early period, where we find references to *mleccha* as an overarching terminology exclusively subsuming the outsider but without any allusion to the particular groups thus designated. This is followed by a description of individual social groups known by their particular names, probably to emphasize the specificity of their linguistic, ethnic, or locality identity in the same literature. This tendency of describing individual social groups, sometimes with and sometimes without any pejorative designation continues into later periods as well. We should like to illustrate this point by taking examples of some of these names like the Kirāta, Niṣāda, Śabara, Pulinda, Andhra, and Puṇḍra as tribes and indigenous peoples of the subcontinent and of the Yavana, Śaka, Pahlava, Tuṣāra, Cīna, and Hūṇa as foreign peoples originally located outside the boundaries of the subcontinent but whose names find a way into Indian literature. For these literary writers, however, they were all put into one basket when their terms of exclusion were explained in the later Dharmaśāstras and epic/puranic literature.

The first use of the term *mleccha* in the Brāhmaṇas is not in the context of any reference to a particular people by name, though it is to do with their linguistic distinctiveness for which reason they had to be kept at a distance at all cost. This emerges with reference to the well-known verses in the *Śatapatha Brāhamaṇa* (III. 2.1.23–24) that allude to the *asuras* who had lost speech or *vāc* because they uttered something incomprehensible similar to words spoken by the *mlecchas*. On looking closely at the linguistic variation in the words *he'lavo he'lavah* that were uttered by the *asuras* in this context, scholars have tried to suggest that this could be a mispronunciation of the words rather than a specimen of hostile speech (Parasher 1991: 83–85). The correct pronunciation of these words would be *he'ari he'ari* (O! spiteful enemies), and this clearly indicates the inability of some people to pronounce the sound *r* and since its interchange with *l* is found to be common in most of the Prākrit dialects, they could be speakers of an Indo-Aryan itself. By the fifth century BCE, all references to the various verb forms of *mleccha* in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (VII.2.18) standardize their meaning to be associated with indistinct speech. Thus, in the second century BCE, when Patanjali (*Mahābhāśya* I.IV) is using the same *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* example of indistinct or hostile speech, he does so to illustrate what he means by a corrupt expression (*apaśabda*). This explanation is given with reference to *brāhmaṇas* learning grammar and language who were instructed to be cautious and avoid the

[9] Various indigenous terms used to describe the word "tribe"in English discussed in Aloka Parasher (1993: 155–157).

mispronunciation of correct speech, otherwise it would lead to their downfall as it did of the *asuras*.

It would be futile to establish the historicity of the *asuras*, as some scholars have done to establish a connection between them and the first people who were designated as *mlecchas* (Parasher 1991: 82–83). The continuous struggle of the *asuras* with the *devas* has to be placed in the larger context of the importance of sacrifice in the ritual practice of these early settlers in parts of northern India that most certainly brought them in contact with people unlike themselves (Shrimali 1983: 15–29); Winternitz (1977, vol. I: 78) has pointed out that in its old meaning as the equivalent of Ahura in the Avesta, the Asura actually meant "possessed of wonderful power" or "god" that is in consonance with its etymological root in "Asu," literally meaning "spiritual, incorporeal, divine" (Monier-Williams 1899: 121). In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the allusion of course is clearly to them as demons—a connotation that remains affixed to describing their attributes in later mythological and religious literature. Their power at the disruption of sacrifice, and thus order has to be noted. It is perhaps for this reason that their speech was seen similar to that of the *mlecchas* who, in their relationship of the *āryas*, too came to be epitomized as upholders of *adharma*. In several references to them in the Dharmasūtras when the rules of conduct are being explained for the *brāhmaṇa* or the *snātaka*, it becomes a strict injunction for the *ārya* not to learn a *mleccha* dialect (*VaDh* VI.41) and further, to avoid this kind of alien and incomprehensible speech, for which even conversation with the *mlecchas* is forbidden. In this context they are listed along with impure and wicked men (*GDh* I.9.17). Haradatta, commenting on this statement, qualifies that one was not completely forbidden to talk to *mlecchas* especially if one had to make enquiries about roads, routes, etc., but no proper conversation was to be had with them.

Concomitantly, *mleccha* areas of habitation came to be excluded in all types of literature. Large territorial areas remained outside what the early Dharmasūtras defined as Āryavarta or the pure land of the *āryas*—the standard description being the land between where the Saraswati disappeared in the west to Kālakavana or the Black forest in the east and between the Himalayas in the north and, in the south, up to what was called the Pariyātra mountain (Parasher 1991: 93–96). The importance of this territory was in terms of the rules of conduct for the *ārya* that were unquestionably authoritative here. Āpastamba does not give us the boundaries of Āryavarta but does advise the *snātakas* not to visit inferior men or their country (*ĀpDh* I.11.32.18). Unlike the later Smṛtis none of these early legal texts venture to mention Mlecchadeśa or the country of the *mlecchas*. The criteria by which it could be identified is elaborated upon in the later Smṛtis. The simple reference point here is to all such land as Mlecchadeśa where the four *varṇas* were not known (*VS* LXXXIV.4). Around the same time, while defining the relative purity of all lands within the generally understood boundaries of Āryavarta that had, by now, come to be known as the land between the eastern and western oceans on either side and the Himalayas and Vindhya mountains in the north and south, respectively, Manu brings in another critical factor to define Mlecchadeśa. He writes: "That land where the black antelope naturally roams, one must know to be fit for the performance of sacrifice; (the tract) different from that (is) the country of the Mlekkhas (barbarians)" (*MDh* I.23, tr. G. Buhler 1886: 33). The idea of the importance of sacrifice is not new in this tradition but its linkage with defining the excluded

mlecchas comes up for the first time. The tradition as continued in one of the later commentaries explains the close association of sacrifice as a forerunner for the spread of *dharma*. Viśvarūpa on the *Yajñavalkya Smṛti* (I.2) elaborates that only when sacrifice as the *kṛṣṇasara* or black antelope had purified new lands and people that *dharma* could be spread there. Undoubtedly, the existence of the *mleccha* had to be located in terms of what was understood as being outside the land occupied by people following the *varṇa-jāti* social order. As human populations ignorant of sacrifice and its efficacy, they had to be theoretically rejected in terms of social and cultural contact. In these descriptions one clearly sees the link between the spread of sacrifice over virgin uncultivated lands by human intervention vested in the followers of *dharma* as the only "natural order of things."

For the present it would be difficult to deviate and elaborate on how in practice contact with the *mlecchas* was in fact common and rampant. The *Arthaśāstra* material in this context is illustrative. In fact, information in this text, when compared with that found in the Dharmaśāstra as whole, was rather pragmatic and always in relationship to the legal and political avenues of the existence of outside groups. One of the important references in this regard is when Kauṭilya is describing the rules pertaining to the selling of offspring. He forbids the *ārya* community, including the śūdra, from doing so but does not consider this to be an offense among the *mleccha* community (*AŚ* III.13.1–2). There is a strong possibility that he was referring here to the Greek (Yavana) practice of slavery that had become quite familiar doing this period. Though like the other Brahmanical texts Kauṭilya is not forthcoming on naming these particular *mleccha* peoples, he does give numerous instances of their benefit for the state and the security of the king (*AŚ* VII.14.27, XII.4.23). The significant point in this regard is the allusion to the *aṭavikā* or wild tribes of regions that were either on the borders of the kingdom or beyond it. Nonetheless, whether it was their role as a contingent of the army (*aṭaviibala*) (*AŚ* IX.2.7–8) or their use as spies (*AŚ* XIV.1.2) in the interior of the king's palace (*AŚ* I.12.21), the impression one is left with is that the *Arthśāstra* was quite knowledgeable about groups designated as the *mlecchas* but that they were not listed by their specific generic names. Rather, as "approved men and women of *mleccha* communities" they could be easily disguised as humpbacks, dwarfs, *kirātas*, dumb or deaf persons, idiots or blind persons so that in the country where they were to be used as spies they would look credible as to the enemy's country dress, profession, language, and birth. In the *Arthaśāstra*, *mleccha* as a suffix to describe the *aṭavi* or wild tribes (*AŚ* XII.4.23; VII.10.16) is in consonance with information we get from foreign writers of the period like Megasthenes, whose observation was that Indians were surrounded by barbarian tribes who differed form the rest of the population (McCrindle 1983: 20–21). For more clarification on this subject of how these so-called barbarian tribes were named one has to examine some of the above literature and ascertain their knowledge of the names of tribes, indigenous peoples, foreigners, and outsiders that gradually came to be understood as the *mleccha* or *milakkha* communities from time to time.

In common perception, ancient Indian society was supposedly marked only by the apparently powerful hold and tenacity of addressing groups based on their *varṇa*/*jāti* nomenclature. This has to be revised. Some of the earliest texts also inform us of other categorizations of social groups highlighting intricate details of their

cultural and social diversity. This involved description of people in terms of their ethnic appellations who initially stood outside the formal system of a *varṇa*, ordered society. One of the earliest classifications of human population in this regard, much written about by scholars, was in terms of *āryas* being contrasted with *dāsas* or *dasyus* (Shrimali 1983: 24–29; Parasher 1991: 182–185). This classification has a bearing on the broader distinctions that were made between the civilized society and the barbarian rather than simply defining hierarchical relationships in society. It has been suggested that the *dasyus* were considered as a people separate from the Vedic tribes with a distinct language and lifestyle, while the *dāsas*, like the śūdras, could be understood as one of the Vedic tribes (Sharma 1980: 10, 45). The development of the complex *gotra* system, it has been suggested, reflected the assimilation of the Aryans and pre-Aryans into one society (Kosambi 1950: 50). Primarily because the early Vedic period was a pastoral society, it has been further suggested that there was flexibility in the practice of endogamy, allowing women of the *dāsa* tribes to be incorporated and their children did not suffer any disabilities and could attain the rank of priests, etc. (Sharma 1975: 1ff.). This led simultaneously to the absorption, at least to some extent, of the beliefs and practices of these so-called tribes. But, as is well known, the *dāsas* were gradually employed by the *āryas* in subject positions, implying their incorporation in another way. Enough data on the subject has been culled from a variety of literally sources to indicate that the term *dāsa* was used to indicate a condition of slavery for people coming from different social strata,[10] and not necessarily referring to a particular caste or community. In one of the first writings on the subject, Fick explains the complexity of their place in early Indian society. He clarifies that they could definitely not be categorized as "castes" and therefore, they were not what he describes as the "despised castes" who had the adjunct of "impurity" attached to them, but neither were they the exact equivalents of the slaves known in the classical Greek and Roman tradition (Fick 1972: 304–305). There is need to take cognizance of the fact in the early Buddhist context (*Maj.N* II:149) we are told that among some people like the Yavanas and Kāmbojas there were only two *varṇas*, defined as the *āryas* and *dāsa*, commonly translated as the master and slave, emphasizing thereby their class and occupational position. This would then indicate the existence of enclaves of slavery as understood in the Greek classical tradition. But these select examples would still not entail the existence of slavery as a given "mode of production" as found in the ancient Greaco-Roman world, an argument well elaborated in earlier scholarship on the subject (Kosambi 1975: 22–25).

The case of the *dasyus* was strikingly different in the earliest references to them. Apart from a noting of their physical appearance, their forts and wealth are also taken note of (*ṚV* II.10.8, I.33.4). Most marked is reference to their speech, which is conveyed through the use of the term *mṛdhravāc* and rendered to mean unintelligible and hostile (*ṚV* V.29.10, VII.6.3). This kind of speech was also attributed to the demon Vṛtra (*ṚV* V.32.8), to wicked people (*ṚV* X.23.5), and when referring to the hostility of the Purus with the *āryas* (*ṚV* VII.18.13). Clearly, unlike the *dāsas*, the

10 Fick (1972: 307) cites the example of a *grāmabhojaka* (village superintendent) who was made a slave by the king because he spoke ill of the village community. See also, for instance, Devaraj Chanana (1990: 34–37).

dasyus continued to remain outside the *ārya* value system, which is evident by Manu's telling allusion to the *dasyus* as all those people who were classed as outside the system of four *varṇas* irrespective of whether they spoke the language of the *āryas* or *mlecchas* (*MDh* X.45). His commentators, trying to understand the exact implication of this verse, in fact end up suggesting on the one hand that the *dasyus* could be understood as certain foreign and indigenous peoples generally called the *mlecchas*, whereas on the other could also be understood as one of the *pratiloma jātis* (Parasher 1991: 185). Manu himself, in another context, refers to the Caṇḍāla as Dasyus and the meat of an animal procured by them was supposed to be nonpolluting (*MDh* V.131). In yet another case, we are informed that the *dasyu* as alien could not act as a witness (*MDh* VIII.66). Explaining these various contexts of the occurrence of the term *dasyu*, Doniger aptly concludes: "The *dasyu* was in Vedic times a non-Aryan or a barbarian, often a demon; later the *dasyu* was a slave, and still later a robber or man fallen from caste. The word came to be used as a general term of opprobrium, denoting . . . . a murderer, a bad tempered man, or a low-caste man. In Manu, it usually designates a person of no caste at all, somehow outside of the entire caste system" (Doniger and Smith 1991: 113). In the general early usage of both the terms *dāsyu* and *mleccha*, the meaning of being some sort of outsider to the *ārya* value system is clearly conveyed. Nonetheless, in the case of the former the borderline between the outcast and the outsider was thin, and locating them within permanently rigid compartments as being outside or inside the *varṇa* system was a difficult exercise for even the most committed and orthodox of the law writers in ancient India. All in all, the Indian literary tradition does not present a clear-cut model wherein tribes could be understood to have transformed themselves into various castes, and we submit that it is this conscious ambiguity in their literature that reflects the complexity of the tribe-civilization relationship. We next turn to take a look at this dimension in terms of how individual names of outside groups can be mapped.

For the sake of convenience, the specific names of certain peoples that were commonly addressed to as the *mleccha* have been charted out (table 16.4), indicating the gradual change in the context in which they came to be used. The antiquity of some of them, like the Kirāta, Niṣāda, Śabara, Pulinda, and Andhra, go back to the Vedic literature. Of these, the first two occur in relation to the importance of sacrifice that was given a special meaning in the way the *ārya* society was developing around this time. Thus, while describing the *puruṣamedha* sacrifice in which some eighty-four victims were dedicated, the Kirāta is dedicated to *guha*, the deity of the cave (*TS* III.4.12.1; *Vaj.S* XXX.16). At the same time, their association with the mountains as a people known to be hostile is also forthcoming from these early texts (*AV* X.4.14; *PB* XIII.12.5). Association of the Niṣādas with Vedic sacrifice seems more widespread, given the different contexts in which they are involved. An *iṣṭi* had to be performed by a Niṣāda chieftain in one case (*Vaj.S* XV.27; *TS* IV.5.4.2, etc.), while in another, the performer of the Viśvajit sacrifice has to have residence among them for its favorable completion (*KB* XXV.15; *PB* XVI.6.8, etc.). Both examples establish the status of the Niṣādas as a full-fledged tribe living in close proximity to the brahmanical society; a point that becomes clear with Yāska's mention of them in the *Nirukta* as part of the *pañca jana* that we have cited above. It is of some interest to note that the later-day outcast Caṇḍāla, at this stage, was similarly known for his ethnic individuality and

dedicated to *vāyu*, the deity of wind, as part of the *puruṣamedha* sacrifice or the symbolic human sacrifice. This critical association with sacrifice of both of what we have defined as the outcast and outsider groups has important bearing on our overall analysis that we shall turn to discuss toward the end. There was another, more negative, way in which the identity of the so-called outsiders was expressed in the Vedic context while still mentioning their individual ethnic affiliations. Four later-day *mleccha*-designated peoples—the Śabara, Pulinda, Andhra, and Puṇḍra—find mention in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* as the "cursed sons" of Viśvāmitra as they had disobeyed their father and were thus banned to live beyond the borders ("ends of the earth"). In the same story in the *Mahābhārata*, these "disobedient sons" of Viśvāmitra were simply cursed as "dog-eaters" and *mlecchas*. However, in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* they are called Dasyus (*AB* VII.18; *ŚŚS* XV.26). In the earliest mention of these names it is therefore clear that their separate identity was a recognized feature that could not be overlooked.

It is pertinent in this regard to note that the early Dharmasūtras rarely mention any of them except for the Niṣādas and Yavanas, who are now given the status of mixed *jātis*, and the Puṇḍras are known for their mixed origin (tables 16.1, 16.2, 16.4). It is only from the time of the *Mānavadharmaśāstra* that the mention of almost all these names occurs either in the context of them being low mixed *jātis* or as degraded kṣatriyas. Manu's writings are important from two points of view: first, as noted above, he had systematically identified the occupational identity with the ethnic/individual identity of these people. The Andhras emerge as a new mixed *jāti* in this *smṛti* for the first time, and both the Niṣādas and Andhras (tables 16.1, 16.2) are identified as hunters. Second, Manu has convincingly argued that Order had also to be established by separating those that had "fallen" from doing their duties or had disobeyed the *brāhmaṇas*. In this latter category were placed ruling elites that were not "born into" the required kṣatriya status, and the term used to describe them was *vṛṣalas* or those who go against *dharma*. As listed in table 16.4 irrespective of the fact that they were wild tribes, indigenous peoples from different parts of the subcontinent or foreigners, they find their way into this list of degraded kṣatriyas. Thus, apart from the Puṇḍra, Yavana, Śaka, and Pahlava, which are listed here, this group also included the Oḍras, Drāviḍas, Kāmbojas, Pāradas, Cīnas, Kirātas, Daradas, and Khasas (*MDh* V.43–44). The *Mahābhārata* (*MBh* XIII.33.19–20, 35.17–18) has a similar list but with some new names added, namely, Kalindas, Pulindas, Uṣinaras, Mahiskas, Mekalas, Lāṭas, and Barbaras.[11]

It is in the epic tradition that we find rationalizations and explanations about the origin of most of the outsiders as *mlecchas* whose existence in society could not be

[11] The names of these people, apart from including the well known ones for foreigners like the Greeks, Persians, Scythians, and Chinese, include people living on the borders like the Daradas around Peshawar, Kāmbojas on the borders of the north-west, and Kirātas and Khasas on the borders of the northeast. Finally, they also include the Drāviḍas or Southerners, the Puṇḍras and Lāṭas known for their settlements in Bengal, the Oḍras from Orissa, and other names like Paradas who were known for adultery or Barbaras or those who mumbled their words, making their language indistinct.

discounted by the early centuries CE. The most inclusive myth in this regard is the birth of these groups from Nandini, the magical cow of the *brāhmaṇa* Vasiṣṭha who created a *mleccha* army to counter Viśvāmitra, a kṣatriya. Notwithstanding their miraculous origin from the various parts of the body of this cow, the significance of this narration is to account for their acceptance as essential members of society despite their being *mlecchas*. It may be noted that their birth is not from the primeval man or *mahāpuruṣa* but symbolically from the body of the divine cow owned by one of the most important sages of the time. This list included the Pahlavas, Śabaras, Śakas, Yavanas, Puṇḍras, Kirātas, Dramidas, Sinhalas, Barbaras, Daradas, Mlecchas and several others described through the term *nānāmlecchagaṇais tadā* (*MBh* I.165. 35–37). The inclusion of wild tribes like the Śabaras and Pulindas in the *Mahābhārata* reflects on a closer association that its heroes, the Pāṇḍavas, had with the forest, though these groups were in no way established politically like the Yavanas, Śakas, etc. In another myth on the given status of some of these powerful groups as *mlecchas*, we are informed of how they, along with the Haihayas and Tālananghas, had vanquished the kingdom of Bāhu of the legendary Ikṣavāku Dynasty. Sagara, the son of Bāhu, soon recovered the kingdom and would have destroyed the Śakas, Yavanas, Kāmbojas, Pahlavas, and Paradas but they appealed to the family priest of Sagara, Vasiṣṭha, for protection. In this narration we once again see the role of Vasiṣṭha as their benefactor. In the *Harivaṃśa* (X.44–45) version of this story we are informed that originally they were kṣatriyas but lost this status due to the intervention of Sagara on the advice of Vasiṣṭha. What is of critical significance is that apart from their being instructed to wear distinguishing hairstyles and beards, Vasiṣṭha is said to have absolved them from the established duties to offer oblation to the fire and the study of the Vedas (*MBh* III.106–108). The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa's* (IV.3.38–41) narrative specifies that it was for this reason they had been abandoned by the *brāhmaṇas* and became *mlecchas*. Both these myths have been framed in the context of conflict. In the first it is between a *kṣatriya* and *brāhmaṇa* and in the latter between the traditional *kṣatriyas* and the new ruling elites. Clearly, the inoculator's premises defines the boundaries of the discourse and finally, offers explanations for the existence of people that formed different elements of the population noted for their military might. The critical factor in defining their exclusion was in accepting that many of these people do not accept the authority of the Veda or of sacrifice that was so important to define the Self's notion of order in society. Added to this, their relation to the body of the *mahāpuruṣa* or Cosmic Man is replaced with the body of the sacred cow as their progenitor. However, the notion of the body, ritual practice, and their link to sacrifice and thus *dharma* was the necessary pattern of explaining both inclusion and exclusion in this worldview.

The last of the myths that we discuss pertains to explaining the origin of the Niṣāda (a name that does not find place in any of the above lists) as the progenitor of the *mlecchas*. This is an important illustration of the larger contact, interaction, and conflict which the settled agrarian society had with the forest and all that it represented. The story of King Veṇa is related in various Purāṇas (*Br.P* II.36; *MP* X.4–10; *ViP* I.13.37; *VāP* I.120–122; *BP* IV.14.42–46) and the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh* XII.59.101–103) with variations in detail, but all of them locate the Niṣādas as prominent inhabitants of the forests and mountains of the Vindhyas. The mythical origin of the Niṣādas is explained in relation to the evil deeds of King Veṇa who did

not follow the rules of *varṇāśramadharma*. The sages, therefore, churned his left thigh and from it emerged a man like a charred log with a flat face who was extremely short. The *brāhmaṇas* ordered him to "sit down"—*niṣīda*—and thus came into being the Niṣāda. The myth continues to explain that they were known for their evil deeds with occupations like fishing/hunting, and considered *mlecchas (MP* X.7). Besides their association to the *mlecchas*, Niṣādas were also listed with cannibals, Karṇapravaras, Kālamukhas, Rākṣasas (*MBh* II.28.44–45). and such people that possessed only one leg, eyes on the forehead etc. All these peculiar looking tribes are said to have fought on both sides during the *Mahābhārata* War (*MBh* II.47.12–20). Though many of these were seemingly not human, their existence as contesters to the proper functioning of society was well established in the psyche of the writers of these myths. On the other hand, when the right thigh of King Veṇa was churned it produced the righteous and virtuous Pṛthu, who became the ideal king and established law or *dharma* and brought back peace to the earth. Here, the clear recognition that the existence of chaos had to be explained in terms of given spatial, ethnic, and occupational criteria, leaves little doubt about the sense of order and civilization the authors of these texts were trying to establish. Once again, the association of the body with *dharma* is established explaining, critically in this case, the outlandish and often even nonhuman or supra-human presence of forces that were not conducive for establishing order in society.

Within the Brahmanical framework, knowledge of outcasts and outsiders was partially systematized and consolidated only in the context of lexical definitions, where we see a narrowing down of names thus excluded. The one pertaining to the end of the period under discussion is by Amarasimha, whose lexicon, the *Amarakośa* (Haragovind Shastri 1970: 111–116), dated to the fifth century CE, came to be referred to by later tradition as well. By bringing together under one chapter the various names for outcasts and outsiders, for the first time, we get the most concise connotation of the various names discussed above (tables 16.1, 16.2, 16.4). In his chapter entitled *śūdravarga* (*AK* Ch. X), Amarasimha clearly distinguishes between the different types of people living on the margins of mainstream society and in a subordinate condition. He first begins with the definition of a śūdra, who was conventionally called a *jaghanyaja* or one born from the nether limbs but, in another definition, was also understood as an issue from the mixed marriages of spouses belonging to different castes (referring here to the term *varṇa*). A list of śūdra *jātis* thus formed were then listed (*karaṇa, ambaṣṭha, ugra, māgadha, māhiśya, kshatṛ, súta, vaidehika, rathakāra, cāṇḍāla*) along with their assigned vocations. Most of this list refers to various artisans and professional groups who were further called "mixed mixtures." As noted above, Manu defined many of these as outcasts. All these were, however, clearly distinguished in this dictionary from those that were called by low and contemptuous (*nīca*), terms for which ten synonyms (*pāmara, jālma, prākṛta, kṣudra, nihīna, itara*, etc.) were given in the text. Further, for the slave or *dāsa* eleven equivalents were given (*kiṅkara, bhṛtya, bhujiśya, preṣya, paricāraka*, etc.) and for the Caṇḍāla nine synonyms (e.g., *mātaṅga, niṣāda, janagama, pukkala, śvapaca*, etc.) were given. This is followed by the mention of the term *mleccha* and its meaning to describe mainly the wild hunting tribes (*kirāta, śabara, pulinda*, and then followed by *ādi* or etc.). Finally, these terms were differentiated from terms like *vyādha* or *mṛgayu* that were used to describe hunters living in close proximity to settled life. What is important to note in these definitions is that whereas, at one level, they were distinguished from each other, at another, a certain amount of ambiguity was still perceptible between them. Thus, for instance, Cāṇḍāla was mentioned as one of the mixed *jātis* in the definition and category of the śūdra and was also independently described to indicate the lowest category along with the names of several other groups mentioned as synonymous with it. Interestingly, here the Niṣāda occurred as a synonym of the Caṇḍāla whereas, in the epic literature was well known as the progenitor of the *mlecchas*.

The lexicon differentiates between the *śūdra, dāsa, caṇḍāla*, and *mleccha* in order to articulate the dominant society's concern with separating those lower orders that were members of the fourth *varṇa* from the ritually impure groups outside it, those that were slaves, and finally, those that were culturally identifiable as different communities. That it clubs all these groups in one chapter is of course only to emphasize their commonality in terms of being at the receiving end of society vis-à-vis the dominant and privileged groups, which on the other hand, are described in three separate chapters in the same dictionary. Another aspect that emerges while understanding these definitions is the fact that they are implicitly placed in relation to the *varṇa* system. Thus, śūdras were located at the bottom of this hierarchy but very much within its ambit. The Caṇḍālas were placed on the critical margin of the *varṇa* society and linked to it in terms of their conscious exclusion from it. Finally, the *mlecchas* were defined totally outside it as the perpetual outsiders and therefore, as potential contesters of the *varṇa* ideology. The *Amarakośa* defined the *mleccha* to be exclusively applied to wild tribes, but the term, as noted above, also came to be used in different kinds of literature to commonly describe foreigners. Finally, in the above definition there was also a specific concern with addressing members clubbed in each of the broad groups through their particular names that, over time, sometimes became generic names for particular kinds of occupational activity or distinct ethnic characteristics. Undoubtedly, terms like *dāsa, antyaja, caṇḍāla* or *mleccha* were more frequently used in a generalized manner but they did not supersede the use of other more particular terminology to describe the specificity of the subordination or marginality that each of the various groups were affected by. In other words, it captures the overall essence of the Brahmanical tradition to allow for flexibility in the usage of these names in specific contextual situations

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In the case of both the outcast and the outsider we were confronted with a variety of nomenclatures and the lack of the systematic use of a single uniform term to address them. Apart from the question of a multiplicity of contexts and regional historical situations that must necessarily be taken into account to explain this diversity of names, there is also a need to understand the ideological underpinnings of why this was so in order to effectively highlight the perception of how the subordinate and marginal groups should emerge as historical subjects of enquiry in early India. The way the names were used reflected on how early Indian society, particularly its ideologues, thought and spoke about these groups with the initial intention that their existence should not impede the proper functioning of the order established for the day-

to-day functioning of society. This primary concern, however, hinged on preserving and simultaneously explicating the validity of sacrifice and *dharma*. These concerns, in turn, were built on a deeper understanding of human contact with nature that essentially revolved around the notions of the body of the Cosmic Universal Being or *mahāpuruṣa*. This understanding of the inter-link between the universal, divine, social, and individual body defined all aspects of life and existence in this view of the world. It was comprehensively articulated in the earliest literary texts and, as argued by us elsewhere in another temporal and spatial context, also percolated into the ritual, artistic, and religious practice of ordinary folk (Parasher-Sen 2002: 13–39).

In explaining this system of classifications based on natural phenomena in the Veda, Brian Smith points to an important dichotomy that marks the characterization of village/sacrificial/edible animals from those that were jungle/non-sacrificial/inedible. According to this logic, the human being proper or *puruṣa* belonged to the former domesticated category and was also designated as *paśu*. The latter, on the other hand, were associated with other humans who, being nonsacrificial etc. were referred to as *kimpuruṣa*, translated by Smith as "pseudo-man." The latter were part of a larger entity sometimes called the *mayu āraṇya* or the "barbarian of the jungle," *puruṣa mṛga* or "wild man," *kinnaras* and so on (Smith 1994: 255). He then projects this understanding on to the human world wherein the dichotomy gets played out as a binary contrast between the civilized and the noncivilized. Thus Smith writes: "It seems probable, however, that in the Vedic texts it is the tribal peoples living outside of the Aryan settlements to which all Sanskrit terms refer. These beastly men are the 'other' of civilized Vedic society, just as the outcast wild animals are the opposites of the domesticated village animals. Because they are not 'food' because they are excluded from sacrifice, and because they dwell in the jungles, these 'pseudo-men' can be regarded as ontologically inferior versions of 'real' humans" (Smith 1994: 256). The centrality of sacrifice that defines exclusion in this analysis has to be accepted as significant. However, one would like to argue that between the two extremes of the absolutely uncivilized and the ideally civilized there were significant stages of the space in between that the humans were meant to necessarily interact with. The forest with all that it held was the immediate environment that surrounded the early settlements of the *āryas* on the subcontinent. The forest was not such an uncharted territory. It was effectively sought out in different narratives as the site for unfolding and controlling many of unknown forces in nature that the human mind had to come to grapple with. Its different niches, like the water areas, caves and caverns, thick forest groves and mountainous hilly areas, were all said to have been guarded by certain mythic characters that were human as well as suprahuman, like the Apsaras, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Nāgas, Rākṣasas, Yakṣas, etc. These beings were undoubtedly creations of the human mind. The perception of bountifulness of nature, still uninhabited and virgin, was depicted as being controlled by these forces. The un-violated forests and mountains or unpolluted waters in these depictions provided potentialities for the human beings to both banish fear of the unknown and the mysterious as well as prepare the ground for the harnessing and conquering of nature. The stage was thus set when these benign and not so benign spirits of the wild, as guardians of these unknown terrains, had to necessarily interact with the humans. Both their destinies were inextricably interlocked with each other. The question was how to

come to terms with defining the Self that was in complex ways *dependant on the Other* and therefore, maintaining contact with them equally crucial.

Initially, as vividly described in the *Atharva Veda*, there was indeed the dark Other representing the wild and inaccessible. Later, as descriptions in the epic traditions tell us, it also became a terrain that had to be conquered with conviction and commitment. Taking examples from these texts, Gouri Lad (1984, 1989, 1991–92, 1993) has argued that in the different phases of interaction, the forest slowly gets emptied out of their "spirited protectors," especially when one reads through the brave exploits of the great Pāṇḍavas like Arjuna and Bhīma or those of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa during the course of their forest interlude or *vanavāsa*. It is pointed out that whereas in the Vedic context of the *Atharva Veda* the suprahumans were conceived of as spirits of life, fertility, and joy that were eternally free, a new dimension was added to these interactions with humans when these spirits were assimilated into the narrative of the epics. It has been rightly noted that the mission of the human encounter with the forest in each of the two epics was different—in the *Mahābhārata*, probably representing an earlier stage, one sees conflict and chance encounters with the dreaded forces of the forest but often these end up in a conciliatory mood. The Pāṇḍava heroes like Arjuna and Bhīma even marry the Apsaras and Rākṣasis that led to the birth of a composite progeny. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, on the other hand, the forest spirits are unequivocally represented as evil forces that have to be totally eradicated and destroyed. Note that in all case the desires of marriage or love on the part of the Rākṣasas and Rākṣisis vis-à-vis the main protagonists of this epic are spurned with disgust. In these mythological narratives the complexity of human existence is dwelt upon and woven in terms of the personification of these heroes with divine elements that was necessarily meant for the destruction of those forces occupying the forestlands. This was done within the larger understanding of maintaining Universal or Cosmic Order that became central for understanding the penetration of the sacrificial fire and all that it symbolized into these new terrains. The sojourn of the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* in the forest and their interaction with these suprahuman spirits had a significant psychosocial impact during later centuries. Given this context, Lad also notes: "And all this happens not because the Brāhmaṇas may perform their Yajñyas and the gods may derive succour from them but it happens because man is groping his way across unknown territory, marked by mysterious dread at every bend and turn, in every nook and corner. The conquest of fear takes vivid forms" (Lad 1991–92: 539). By isolating and often destroying the spirits of the forests, the *brāhmaṇas* and *kṣatriyas* enhance and put forth the legitimizing basis for social conflict and exclusion between established settlers and less sedentary and more volatile forest-dwellers. The latter try to oust the encroachments on the forest by their antagonistic attitude to sacrifice—those that succeeded continued to remain outsiders or *mlecchas*, while those that were either coerced to be part of it or willingly submit to it got accommodated as *antyas*, *antyayonis*, or *antyāvasāyins* at various levels in the newly expanding social hierarchy of the agrarian society. This was a continuing process of interaction that the *smṛtis*, in line with remembered tradition, were able to register by adding new names.

Significantly, the meaning that was attached to these names could not erase the original association of some of these peoples to the forest and its produce. Doniger, in her translation of the *Laws of Manu* (Doniger and Smith 1991: 235), recognizes that

even though caste names are difficult to translate they "have suggestive lexical elements" that made her translate each of these names. Though this makes difficult reading for those unfamiliar with the text as one has to come up with such translations as "Remaining with the mother" for the Ambaṣṭhas, "Dog-cooker" for the Śvapāka, "Shame on you" for the Dhigvanas, and so on, Doniger conveys an important point that inherent in the name was not only the occupational identity (like "hunters" for the Niṣāda, "cowherd" for the Ābhira, "reed-worker" for the Veṇa, and so on) but also a sense of meaning illustrating the nature of their position in society. More than explanation, it was the language of naming that defined social exclusion instantly. In relation to sacrifice, one noted that, in some cases, these wild tribal people were dedicated to it as victims or made part of its larger practice, while in other cases, their loss of speech or degradation led to their defeat or expulsion from it. Both situations demanded interaction or dialogue with these Others. In case of the former, the Caṇḍāla, Śvapāka, Pulkasa, Niṣāda, etc., dealing with slaughter, cremation, death, hunting, and fishing came to be later regarded as outcasts because of their symbolic and real association with violence, though their function was seen as integral to the functioning of the larger society. Following the above criteria, even the name of the priest, the Kṣattṛ (table 16.1), who carved out the sacrificial victim for the Vedic sacrifice was listed along with worst outcast men. But, their origin, however, illegitimate, was explained as being part of the *mahāpuruṣa* in the *śāstra*. In this way they partly get adjusted into the natural order of things. The Kirāta, Pulinda, Śabara, Andhra, Yavana, Śaka, etc. typified disorder of another kind, not so much because they represented violence but because they innately carried with them the effective means of potentially disrupting sacrifice through their speech and behavior. Their existence had to be accounted for and reckoned with because of the perennial threat they posed as perpetual contesters of privilege. Some among these, like the Kirāta, Yavana, etc. got incorporated in an indirect way as *vṛṣalas*, literally śūdras or degraded kṣatriyas, but not without recognizing that they lost their original position because they had been violators of sacrifice and Vedic ritual. In both cases their area of habitation was marked out as excluded territory not conducive for living till sanctified by sacrifice. One could recognize the Caṇḍāla/Śvapāka and the Śabara/Pulinda to epitomize the typical characteristics of the outcast and outsider, respectively. However, it is our submission that categorizations were not so neat and compartmentalized.

There is no doubt that identifying the different categories of names in relation to their significance and importance to sacrifice was a central feature of this discourse of power, but clearly the concern was also to allow the system to be self-generating, an unending process of fixing and imposing names. Forest peoples like the Caṇḍāla, Pulkasa, Niṣāda, Kirāta, etc. thus got linked indirectly to the *varṇa* order in society but not totally. At the same time, the Niṣāda and Kirāta also remained outside it, as the definitions from the *Amarakośa* tell us. As a continual process with no one specific localization, this meant that the binary opposition between the civilized and the uncivilized was not so easy to maintain. This broke down repeatedly, allowing a slippage that resulted in several identities emerging in between the two and sometimes occupying the realm of both, being on the margin of the civilized and also totally outside it. This was a dynamic relationship, throwing up a plurality of identities drawn from the same source. The diversity of these caste names still associated with their old

functions sustained diversity in ritual and in even such things as botanical life but, at the same time, their association with disorder meant that a rejection of the common hierarchical social code was impossible; in addressing them, all one was permitted to do was to flutter from one name to another. These terminologies and naming criteria do become relatively more specific in the *Amarakośa*, but still there is an absence of individual proper names. It must be recognized that from the point of view of the *Dharmaśāstra*, their purpose was to define the larger picture of social exclusion and, therefore, one need not look for proper names in such texts, as it was not their purpose to do so. Nonetheless, the text of the dominant was concerned about the process of securing, of ensuring or of bringing Order through sociolinguistic practice by assigning to the subject with a name, if not a proper name as Certeau had suggested in the context of his study.[12]

Assigning a proper name to the outcast or the outsider was not the norm in different types of Brahmanical texts, and clearly the intention was with classifying larger entities rather than individuals. This can be differentiated from the Buddhist's concern for using proper names both in their texts as well as inscriptions. Yet the Buddhist and Jaina perceptions of the subject underlining the concern with the social reality of inclusion and exclusion must be located in a complex and diverse social environment. Designations of a general kind, individual caste names were well delineated and classified even in this literature as this was an identity intrinsic to defining the social fabric of the times. In this context Deshpande (Bronkhorst and Deshpande 1999) also draws our attention to the wider use of the terms *āriya* and *anāriya*—two terms, he concludes, that should not be looked upon as mere ethnic designations but also understood as asserting claims of moral, social, and spiritual high or low status. It would of course be worthwhile to keep both terminological landscapes in mind when trying to analyze the conditions that allowed new ways of naming while, at the same time, allowing inclusion without necessarily breaking down all barriers demarcating the civilized from the uncivilized. While contrasting the Brahmanical material from the Buddhist and Jaina, it is important to note that the latter were more forthcoming in giving specific information on the names of peoples that were generally considered excluded. In fact, in the early Buddhist Piṭaka literature, the original distinction between the *ārya* and the *milakkha* was made on the basis of the lands they inhabited, the Majjihimadesa and *paccantima janapada*, respectively. The latter areas were said to abound in ignorant "unintelligent" peoples (*VinP* V.13.12). But many of the later Buddhist commentaries on these texts, especially in those that are the writings of the Buddhaghosa (fifth and sixth century CE), we find the specific names of the so-called barbarian people. Thus for instance—"*milakkhakam nāma yo koci anāriyako andhadamḷādi*" (*Samantapāsādikā* on *VinP* I:255). While initially the Buddhist concern was to define the borders and characteristics of the land they called Majjhimadesa, leaving us with a vague idea of the *paccantima* (*pratyanta*) or border territories, Buddhaghosa gives rather specific information about the latter. He lists for

[12] This is perhaps not done because in Certeau's words: "It aims at restoring the postulate of all language, that is, a stable relation between the interlocutor, 'I', and a social signifier, the proper name," which was not the essential aim of this textual tradition (Certeau 1988: 256).

us the *milakkha bhāsās* or languages as being those of the Andh, (Andhra) Damiḷa, (Tamil) Kirāta, Yonaka (Yavana), etc. (*Manorathapuraṇī* on *AngN* II:289), and further he establishes the superiority of the Māgadhabāsa over these languages (*Sammohavinodanī:* 388).

The Jaina *aṅgas* too in the beginning give general instructions to the monks and nuns to avoid areas being inhabited by the *milakkhas*, as their habits were those of the half-civilized and unconverted people that were prone to be tempting the wise and the learned (*ĀcS* II.3.8). But again, one of its commentators gives us a specific definition of the *milakkha* as the Varavaras (Barbaras), Savaras (Śabaras), and Pulindras (Pulindas). The Jaina literary traditions are important in another context. They, for the first time, give rather lengthy list of specific names of people who were differentiated from the *āriya* as the *anāriya* in terms of the countries inhabited by them. This is found in two texts—the *Prajñāpanā* and the *Praśnavyākaraṇa*. The latter has been considered a very late composition but the former has been dated to the beginning of the Christian era. (Carpentier 1922: 26–27) The *Prajñāpanā*, (I.36–37) can thus be elaborated upon as an instance that gives us for the first time a systematic list of the names of *milikkha* people. It begins with the statement that man is divided into two groups, and poses the question as to who are the *milikkhu*: *ā (ya)riyā ya milikkhū ya, se kim tam milikkha*? The question is then answered by listing out the *milikkha* people as the Saga, Javaṇa, Cilāya, Śabara, Babbara, Murumḍa, Uḍḍa, Bhaḍaga, Niṇṇaga, Pakaṇiya, Kulakkha, Goḍa, Sihala, Pārasa, Godhā, Konca, Damiḷa, Pulimda, Hārosa, Dobava, Gandhāravā, Pahaliya, Ayyala, Roma, Pasa, Pausa, Malava, Bamdhuya, Suyali, Komkana, Gameya, Palhava, Malava, Maggara, Abhasiya Kanavira, Lhasiya, Khasā, Khasiya, Noha, Ramodha, Dombilaga, Lausa, Pausa, Kakkeya, Akkhaga, Hūṇa, Romaga, Bharu, Maruya, Cilāya, Viyāvāsi, and so on, ending with the phrase *evamādi*. It is difficult to identify some of these names with particular regions or peoples known in other contemporary literature (Parasher 1991: 212–213), but a striking feature is that they are all clearly stated to be part of the thirty-two *anāriyā* countries. The *āriyā* countries are conventionally understood to be only twenty-four. Even if we understand them as rather conventional and standardized descriptions that were meant for an audience in the courts of kings, it does nonetheless speak of a diversity of cultural and regional entities that had to be reckoned with. Thus, rather than the earlier generalized designations of territory as *Āryāvarta* and *Mlecchadeśa*, the Jaina literature emphasizes on the details of what was meant by the countries inhabited by the *ārya* (*āriyā*) and the *mleccha* (*milakkha*) so the Jaina ruling elites were well informed about the various peoples that surrounded their particular kingdoms and areas of control. The above lists are, therefore, valuable since these names include a major part of the Indian subcontinent, providing us in particular with an ethnographic account of ethnic and/or linguistic names that were ostensibly culturally diverse. This is an interesting marker of the way diversity was mapped out by the end of the period under discussion—the *ārya* communities still being smaller than the *anārya* ones. Though empiricism directed this sociology of knowledge, it nonetheless points to a plurality of perceiving the social reality within the different religious traditions of early India—importance also being given to their individual appellations rather than only on one overarching term to describe them. Though to a lesser extent, even within the so-called śramanic traditions the flexibility and interchangeability of the terminology used to describe

various social groups only bespeaks of the impossibility of straight-jacketing people into rigid compartments because of the forces of political and economic change that resulted in a more complex and dynamic social reality in early India. This leads us on to focus more on the discussion in the last section on naming and social exclusion outside the Brahmanical worldview and the dominant literary traditions of the subcontinent to seek the possible alternatives available to social groups thus named.

Individual identity was not always subsumed in caste or ethnic identity, and thus naming by proper name became critical to a new ethos in creating an alternative society. An early Buddhist text the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, in fact, while describing the names of the *hīna* (low) and *ukkaṭṭhā* (high) *jātis*, recognizes that "One may be abused or reproached in ten ways such as by reference to his *jāti*, name, *gotra*, profession, craft": *omasavādo nāma, dasahi ākārehi omasati: jātiyāpi nāmena pi gottenapi kammena pi sippenapi* (*VinP Sutta-vibhanga Pāchittiya*: 11.2). This clearly broadens the scope for identification of both individual and group, and thus provides us a discourse very different from the differentiations that the Brahmanical legal literature was more focused on, namely, *varṇa-jāti* lines. Apart from a large majority of proper names (charted out as Appendix C in Chakravarti 1987: 198–220) referring to the *ucca kulas* (high families), the early Buddhist literature for the first time throws up proper names for the *nīca kulas* (low families) as well. Thus, we have examples of such names as Arittha, the vulture trainer; Upali, Bhesika, and Subhadda, the barbers; Dhaniya and Bhaggava, the potters; Citta, son of an elephant trainer; Kesi, the horse trainer; Cunda, son of a metal smith; Channa, slave or *dāsiputta*; Punna and Punnika, who were slave girls, and so on (Chakravarti 1987: 217–220). Similarly, names from the outcast community like Sunita, who was a *pukkusa* (one of the five lowest groups in society); Talaputa, headman of itinerant actors or *naṭas;* Sati, the fisherman's son; Subha, who was the daughter of a smith; and most clearly Māṭanga, referred to as *caṇḍālaputto sopako* (son of a Caṇḍāla), have been cited as examples to illustrate the early Buddhist concern of not letting birth, occupation, gender, and social status hinder their entry into the core of the Buddhist organization. Most of these names occur in the context of their joining the Buddhist Order as *bhikkhus* or *bhikkhuṇis*. Sometimes, the Buddha reprimands them for the activity that they indulge in and the false notions they carry; at other times, he stays with them, breaking all norms of ritual purity and impurity, and, in most cases, discusses with them the doubts that emerge in their mind, acting as stumbling blocks in their search for the new life in the Sangha. Though there is considerable unanimity among scholars that the Sangha permitted members of the lower orders and even the outcasts to become its members, there is disagreement on the broader composition of the Sangha. As the other names in this list indicate its composition was heavily tilted in favor of those *bhikkhus* whose ancestry was either from the *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, or *gahapati* category. Further, in society at large the earlier prejudices remained, as exemplified in one account narrated in a Jātaka story where two Caṇḍāla boys, Citta and Sambuta, cited by name, were playing flute at the Ujjayini gate when a *setthi's* and *purohita's* daughter sighted them. Being an ominous sight causing pollution, they were thrashed by the people until they were rendered senseless (Cowell 1990, IV: 390–91).

Another location where proper names emerge in large numbers is the early inscriptions from the Buddhist sites. This is in the context of donations being made to

the monasteries, but here too the maximum come primarily from the *gahapati* families; each individual in these cases being referred to by his proper name (Chakravarti 1987: 191–197).[13] There are only a handful of examples that can be cited coming from mainly the artisan communities. Of these the gift by Attha, the *kāmika* or laborer from Sanchi, and the one from Amaravati by Vidhika, son of the *upajhāya* (teacher) Nāga belonging to the generally understood ritually impure *carmakāra jāti* draw our present attention. The latter in particular gives the gift of a slab with an overflowing *purṇaghaṭa* or auspicious vase along with his mother, his wife, his brothers, his son, his daughters and other relatives and friends—*camakārasa nāgaupajhayāputasa vidhikasa samatukasa sabhayakasa sabhatukasa putasa ca nagasa samadhutukasa sanatinitabaindhavasa deyadhamma. Puṇaghaṭakapato* (Luders list 1273: 151–152). Apart from having a proper name for a member of the outcast leather workers' community for such an early period, this inscription points to the important question of these communities now taking to teaching within the confines of the new intellectual order provided by the Buddhism. The rarity of these examples apart, the Jātaka stories and other accounts also tell us about the power of the message being thus conveyed in these narratives that make the Caṇḍālas, *dāsas*, and *dāsis* pupils of the new teaching question the hegemony of the *brāhmaṇas* (Chakravarti 1993: 65–70).

In the case of outsiders, sources left behind by the foreigners themselves throw open a wide range of individual proper names that have been studied by earlier scholarship (Ray 1988: 311–325; Thapar 1997: 34–35). The Brahmanical texts do not even mention the invasion of Alexander, and continue to describe the later invasions of foreign groups in vague terms. However, with reference to the innumerable tribal groups that were considered excluded on the subcontinent, just like the Jātaka stories, the *Kathāsaritasāgara*, a compendium of various tales, does give us the proper names of some of the tribal chiefs like Pulindaka, and this tendency increases during the medieval times. The inscriptions, a more authentic source, particularly at several Buddhist sites on the subcontinent during the period under discussion, on the other hand, do give us proper names of foreigners like the Yavanas, Śakas, and Pahlavas not only as conquerors but also as merchants, traders, and followers of the Buddhist *dhamma*. In most cases the so-called outsiders themselves have inscribed their names. The earliest and most familiar of these are the names of the Greeks going back to as early as the first century BCE like Theodorus Datiputra (Swat Valley inscriptions), Theodama (Bajaur inscription), Denipa or Deinippos (from Taxilla), and so on. From other parts of India too such examples can be cited like Yashavrdha-anas, Dhammayavana from Karle, Yonaka from Nasik, Culayakas or Kshurayakasha from Dhenukakata, and so on. Some of them even acquired Indian names like Yonaka Indragnidattha, the son of one Dharmadeva, who came along with his son Dharmarakshita for the purpose of honoring the Buddha (Chaturvedi 1985: 214–215). The subsequent era of foreign contact with the Śakas and Pahlavas was rather massive, causing mass migrations leading many of these communities to settle on the

13 Based on H. Luders, "A List of Brahmi Inscriptions," *Epigraphia Inidica* 10 (1912).

subcontinent and their names are too innumerable to cite here.[14] These are all names of foreigners coming to the subcontinent that have been noted in inscriptions located in various parts of the country and dated roughly between the second century BCE and the fourth century CE. Recent documentation work along the Karakorum an ancient route into Central Asia has thrown up data on names of a different kind. Being a region beyond the territorial limits of the social Self as defined in the textual traditions discussed above, we find that noting one's identity was simply through the individual's personal name pertaining to all communities irrespective of caste or creed. In analyzing closely some of these names from the short-label inscriptions at one of these sites, namely, Oshibat,[15] we find that a few of these can be attributed to the Buddhist pilgrims, while others to travelers, merchants, and their accompanying support staff and guides following different religious faiths who visited the place. Some of the latter must have been the local population of the region as a whole. Given this rather cosmopolitan nature of the place, the personal names inscribed on the rock surfaces here were of a considerable variety; people coming from different parts of the subcontinent and also from regions to the north and west of it. Without the control of social norms and authority defining the particular localities that they came from it is revealed that none of the personal names are prefixed or suffixed by their respective *kula* or *jāti*. The latter, can however, be deduced by analyzing the meaning of the particular name. Devoid of any explanatory references, it was our submission that questions of identity remained intact. But in the far-flung regions of isolation and uprooted from familiar connections of village town and family, it is interesting to note that rather than emphasizing their caste, guild, or family affiliation, they left their stamp for posterity as individuals. The reason for doing so is not too far-fetched. Oshibat had emerged as a critical meeting point on a significant route of communication both in reality and metaphorically. Whatever the reasons for travel, the crossing over the Karakorum ranges into Central Asia was a daunting task, and there was fear of the difficult and treacherous terrain. Significantly the only clearly etched inscription from this site is the one that reads: *martavyam smartavyam*, namely, that "Man should remember that the day of death is fixed." They did not come to Oshibat for pilgrimage, but made it a site for defining their existence in this life that was inextricably linked to their multiple identities, intermingling with each other, in a land alien to all of them—the *brāhmaṇa*, the Buddhist, the leaders of caravans, merchants, and so on. To those who traveled through it, it had the relevance as a place where, despite being competitors, they all could effectively interact socially, something that was not possible in their countries of origin.

14 Details in Debala Mitra, "Foreign Elements in Indian Population" in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. 2, (Calcutta: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture), p. 621.

15 Aloka Parasher-Sen, "Traveling Names: To and from Central Asia and beyond," presented at the Joint Indo-Russian Seminar, ICHR, New Delhi, November 6–8, 2001 (in press). This was not the site of a *vihāra* or *stūpa*, but an important halting point for travelers. Scholars who have deciphered these inscriptions note that the Kharoṣṭhi inscriptions here are the oldest and can be dated to between the first century BCE to the second century CE. The Brāhmī inscriptions have been placed generally between the fourth century CE and the eighth century CE.

In summary, one can suggest that the use of proper names was possible only (a) when, as in the case of the outcast in particular, they found it possible to opt out of the given ideological parameters that had been more concerned with naming them through their *jāti* identity; or (b) when, in the case of powerful outsiders or foreigners, they inscribed their own names for posterity to remember them by; or (c) when social groups or individuals traveled beyond the boundaries of village, town, or state of their origin, namely, only when they were uprooted from the confines of their particular social setting. To have moved away from the core discussion in the early part of this chapter to the direction of looking at examples of naming from the Buddhist material, both textual and inscriptional, was pertinent in the context of living in contemporary India and in the light of Dr. Ambedkar's quotation cited above that naming was integral to the way social exclusion was defined in the early Indian ethos. He wrote this in 1936, well before his conversion to Buddhism in 1956, but around a time when debates and discussions around the nomenclature to be used to define the impure and downtrodden in colonial India were at its height. Charsley, in a recent article (Charsley 1996: 1–16), has summed up the history of this naming process to argue how the emergence of the term "untoucbable" as a modern construction had both a positive and negative impact. A further point emerging from the above is that modern constructions as "both an interpretation of the past and the basis for affirmative action in the present" (Charsley 1996: 18) remain in contemporary India the critical site for identity formation, politics, and the writing of history.

For purposes of raising the questions of the ill-treatment of outcast groups and drawing in the questions of their political and social struggles, unifying them under a single category was a significant achievement then, as it is today. But the issue of an identity based on value that could be asserted with confidence had still to be achieved when political processes to incorporate them were just beginning to take shape in the colonial setting. Ambedkar eventually felt that the cause for their upliftment had not been able to provide a sense of an independent and solid identity full of confidence that must necessarily reject earlier notions of their selfhood drawing on the authority of the Brahmanical past. He saw a fitting alternative in the one provided by the teachings of the Buddha based on reason and experience. Thus, his conversion to Buddhism can be seen as a conscious attempt at creating a new positive identity that was rooted in cultural values of another past and was not simply born out of a total rejection of the past. This is not a sentiment raised for the first time. For the period under discussion we often tend to forget that Buddhism had provided even then a powerful alternative. This brought into focus the use of proper names and addressed the excluded with a sense of individual identity in the larger context of the new social milieu that was emerging especially in the period "between the empires" that this conference has focused on. Ideological political and spatial contexts inscribed the outcast and outsider in new ways with new identities that could also be treated as being exclusionary categories, but not those based on the criteria of their social and ritual exclusion.

The modern search for a single overarching term in the use of such phrases as untouchable, outcast, or depressed classes in the colonial context was replaced more conventionally by the terms *harijan*, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes just after independence. The effort to rename continues, and currently the most popular terminology that has been accepted is *dalit*[16] or *bahujana* or sometimes even *dalitbahujan*, that tries to encompass within its scope the oppressed *śūdra jātis* as well (Ilaiah 1995: vii–ix), so as to bring under its umbrella a very large segment of the exploited people in Indian society. Rutherford's view that "identity marks the conjuncture of our past with the social, cultural, and economic relations we live within" seems strikingly apt in this context.[17] One problem with the use of these overarching terminologies is that it tends to blank out the existing hierarchies among the *dalit* groups themselves. Even issues of claiming rights under the affirmative action scheme of the government as part of its constitutional obligations gets blurred, since the really deprived among them have little access to these opportunities. Thus, as an anthropologist Charsley suggests: "what needs to be studied now are the differences in the way the local groups . . . communities of people identifying and naming themselves as members of particular castes within villages, and other larger units, are placed economically, socially, culturally and politically" (Charsley 1996: 16). This search, in fact, led us into the larger domain of how the textual traditions of early India (a substantial part of this chapter) articulated the process of naming that then became part of social memory and cultural practice and that which has not totally been erased from the collective psyche even today.

Questions of identity formation are intrinsically related to the way the past is perceived of or written about in historical narratives. The modern craft of history writing in its essential task of retrieving the past each time, with each age and each theoretical framework necessarily constructing new identities. Our overall conclusion suggests that by and large the modern constructions have given us a distorted prism through which we try and understand hierarchy and social diversity in early India both in terms of its documentation and the interpretations built upon it. The written texts of the dominant culture that were used as "footnotes" to do so were embedded in a different conceptualization of time, where history and memory were both engrained and entwined into ritual practice locatable in time (*kāla*) and place (*deśa*) as long as customary law and local practice did not go against *śruti* as canon and *smṛti* as tradition. The aim was not to totally wipe out historical reality altogether, or simply supplant it with structures of the mythical, but rather it was to capture the process of cultural continuity and cultural renewal with interjections, interrogations, and insertions possible within the defined limits of *dharma*. This gave certain distinctiveness to the way traditional India looked at the past and, therefore, the need for a sensitive revaluation of the source material we use to write history. It has been poignantly articulated in a recent publication that: "Pre-colonial forms of knowledge are too often relegated by the scholars of colonialism and nationalism to the happy condition of indeterminacy, diversity, holism—acting as foils for the drama of modernity. Their own conditions of production, internal structures, and agendas for power are too often ignored" (Ali 1999: 9). It is true that the texts that have been used above contain only "fragmented history and form," but they always present "an integrated worldview" (Doniger 1992: 25). Mikael Aktor has comprehensively argued

16 The literal meaning of the word *dalit* being "oppressed."

17 As quoted in J. Rutherford, ed., *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishert, 1990), p.19.

to show how in the *smṛti* or remembered traditions of early India, the very ongoing production of these texts used the past and asserted "epistemological authority" but through a "flexible source" (Aktor 1999: 278). Rather than seeing the texts as part of an unchanging, monolithic discourse of power, one needs to recognize that they were an organism that provided symbiotic spaces that were often tenuous, and the so-called center of power was constantly negotiating with these groups. This of course could not be done without also asserting hierarchy as a mode of being and value that could not at any cost be rejected, and therefore, as Certeau puts it, the identity of the subject was retrieved within the context of power in the "linguistic place of appropriation" (Certeau 1988: 258). The linguistic apparatus that was put in place nurtured a certain flexibility to govern everyday practices and the meanings attached to the words used for them that could be made recognizable, repeatable, and interpretable within the force of tradition. In this way a more effective way of the preservation of various cultural identities through the recognition of diversity was possible to articulate and maintain on the subcontinent for generations. To end, one turns to Certeau again. He writes: "naming simultaneously posits a linkage and a place. It functions at once as *participation in a system* and *as access to the symbolic*" (italics in original—Certeau 1988: 262). Therefore, depending on the context of their use, names have an integrative value or an exclusionary propensity but nonetheless, in both circumstances, they are written into a system of communication.

APPENDIX

TABLE 16.1: OUTCASTS—*ANULOMA* MIXED *JATIS*

NAME	*GD*	*BD*	*VD*	*AŚ*	*MD*	*AK*
Niṣāda	bm + śf bm + vf	bm + śf	bm + śf	bm + śf	bm + śf	Syn. for *Caṇḍāla*
Pāraśava	bm + śf	bm + śf	—	bm + śf	bm+ śf	—
Ambaṣṭha	km + vf	bm + vf	—	bm + vf	bm + vf	bm + vf
Mahisha	—	—	—	—	—	km + vf
Dausamanta	km + śf	—	—	—	—	—
Ugra	vm + śf	km + śf	—	km + śf	km + śf	km + śf
Rathakāra	—	vm + śf	vaiśya	—	—	—
Karaṇa	—	—	—	—	—	vm + śf
śūdra	—	—	—	vm + śf	—	—

ABBREVIATIONS FOR TABLES 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4

AB: *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa ṣa*
AK: *Amarakoṣa*
AŚ: *Arthaśāstra*
BD: *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*
bf: brāhmaṇa female
bm: brāhmaṇa male
Br: *Brāhmaṇas*
BrP: *Brāhmaṇḍa Purāṇa*
Bu: Buddhist
dbl. mix: Double mix
Dhs: Dharmasūtras
GD: *Gautama Dharmasūtra*
HV: *Harivaṃśa*
Ja: Jaina
kf: kṣatriya female
km: kṣatriya male
ks: kṣatriya
Lit: Literature
Mbh: Mahābhārata
MD: *Mānavadharmaśāstra*
MJ: Mixed *Jāti*
P: *Purāṇas*
Ram: *Rāmāyaṇa*
Sam.: *Saṃhitās*
Sev. *P*: Several *Purāṇas*
śf: śūdra female
śm: śūdra male
VD: *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*
vf: vaiśya female
vm: vaiśya male
YP: *Yugo Purāṇa*

TABLE 16.2: OUTCASTS—*PRATLOMA* MIXED *JATIS*

NAME	*GD*	*BD*	*VD*	*AS*	*MD*	*AK*
Sūta	km + bf	km + bf	——	km + bf	km + bf	km + bf
Māgadha	vm + kf	śm + vf	——	vm + kf	vm + kf	vm + kf
Kṛta/Kṣattṛ *Kṣatta*	vm + bf	śm + kf	——	śm + kf	śm + kf	śm + kf
Vaidehaka	śm + kf	vm + kf	——	vm + bf	vm + bf	vm + bf
Āyogava	śm + vf	vm + kf	——	śm + vf	śm + vf	——
Caṇḍāla	śm + bf	śm + bf	śm + bf	śm + bf	śm + bf	śm + bf
Veṇa/Vaiṇa	——	*Vaidehaka* m + *Ambaṣṭha* f (dbl. mix)	śm +vf	*Ambaṣṭha* m + *Vaidehaka* f (dbl. mix)	*Vaidehaka* m + Ambaṣṭha f (dbl. mix)	——
Pulkasa /Pukkasa	——	Niṣāda m + śf	śm + kf	Niṣāda m + *Ugra* f (dbl. mix)	Niṣāda m + śf	——
Kukkuṭa	——	śm/vm + Niṣāda f	——	*Ugra* m + Niṣāda f (dbl. mix)	*śm* + Niṣāda f	——
Antyāvasāyain	——	——	śm +vf	——	——	——
Kuśīlava	——	——	——	*Vaidehaka* m + *Ambaṣṭha* f (dbl.mix)	——	——
Śvapāka	——	*Ugra* m + Kṣattṛ f (dbl. mix)	——	*Ugra* m + Kṣattṛ f (dbl. mix)	*Ugra* m + Kṣattṛ f (dbl. mix)	——
Āvṛtas	——	——	——	——	bm + *Ugra* f	——
Ābhīras	——	——	——	——	bm + *Ambaṣṭha* f	——
Dhigvanas	——	——	——	——	bm + *Āyogava* f	——

TABLE 16.3: *VRĀTYAS*–DEGRADED CASTES
[BASED ON ONLY THE *MĀNAVADHARMAŚĀSTRA*]

bm + bf	km + kf	vm + vf
Bhūrjakaṇṭaka	*Jalla*	*Sudhanva*
Āvantya	*Malla*	*Ācārya*
Vāṭadhānas	*Licchavi*	*Vijanman*
Puṣpadha	*Naṭa*	*Maitra*
Saikha	*Karaṇa*	*Kāruṣan*
	Khasa	*Sātvat*
	Draviḍa	

TABLE 16.4: OUTSIDERS—TRIBES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, FOREIGNERS

NAME	Early Lit.	*Dhs.*	AŚ	*MD*	*AK*	*Epic*	*Puranic*	Bu/Ja
Niṣāda	*Pancajana* Nirukta Chief *Sam./Br.* Residence *Sam./Br.* Evil doers thieves *AB* *Gotra* Pāṇini	MJ Table 16.1	MJ Table 16.1	MJ Hunters Table 16.1	Synonym of *caṇḍāla* Table 16.1	MJ Forest habitat *Mbh/Ram* King Guha *Ram* Origin by Veṇa *Mbh* *Rāṣṭra* Ram	Origin by Vena Forest habitat Sev. *P* Ancestors *mlecchas* *MP*	*Hīna jāti* Bu
Kirāta	Girl *AV* Sacrifice *Sam.* Hostile priest *PB*	—	Spies for state	*Vrātya* ks	Synonym of *mleccha*	Mountain habitat Archtype hunter Warlike spirit Paid tribute *Mbh* Dress, etc Eaters of raw flesh *Mbh/Ram*	Mountain forest habitat Eastern extremity of Bharat Sev. *P*	Lang. *Bu* *Milakkha* Bu/Ja
Śabara *Pulinda*	Cursed sons of Viswamitra *Dasyus* AB	—	Guard border of king -dom		Synonym of *mleccha*	*Mleccha* army of Vasiṣṭha forest habitat *Mbh*	*Mlecchas* Forest habitat Kali Age kings Sev. *P*	*Milakkha* Ja Born of a Yakkhiṇi + king Bu
Āndhra	Cursed sons of Viśwamitra *Dasyus* *AB*	—		MJ Hunters Table 16.1 Live outside village			*Bhṛtya* /servants kali Age kings *Jāti* Sev. *P* Country unfit for *śrāddha* *BrP*	Lang. Bu *Milakkha* *Ja*
Puṇḍra	Cursed sons of Viśwamitra *Dasyus AB*	mixed origin *BD*		*Vrātya* ks		mixed origin people *Mbh*	Sons of Bali Sev. *P*	—
Yavana	Writing Panini Invasion Patanjali	MJ *Sf* + km		*Vrātya* ks as *Dasyus*	*Mleccha* known for astrology	*Mleccha* army of Vasiṣṭha Known as *vṛṣala* Allies in *Mbh* war Rājasūya *Mbh* Destroyed by Sagara *Ram HV*	King of *mlecchas* Invasion *YP* Kali Age kings Destroyers of *dharma* Sev. *P*	Language *dāsas* among them Bu *Milakkhas* Ja
Śakas		—		*Vrātya* ks	*Mleccha* known for era	*Mleccha* army of Vasiṣṭha Known as *vṛṣala* Allies in *Mbh* war Rājasūya *Mbh* Destroyed by Sagara *Ram HV*	*Mlecchas* Invasion *YP* Kali Age kings Destroyers of *dharma* Descendants of Turvasu Sev. *P*	*Milakkhas* Ja
Pahlava		—		*Vrātya* ks		*Mleccha* army of Vasiṣṭha Known as *vṛṣala* Allies in *Mbh* war Rājasūya *Mbh* Destroyed by Sagara *Ram HV*	Kali Age kings Destroyers of *dharma* Sev. *P*	*Milakkhas* Ja

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17

Brahmanical Reactions to Foreign Influences and to Social and Religious Change

Michael Witzel

The period from approximately 200 BCE to 300 CE is usually called a time of invasions, meaning those of the Greeks, Śakas, and Kushanas. One may also call it as a time "between the empires," i.e., between the first pan-Indian realm of the Maurya and the famous, though less extensive realm of the Gupta. However, the 500 years between the Mauryas and the Guptas were perhaps the most turbulent, but probably also the most productive and fertile of Indian history. Its is usually not considered that this period was one of tremendous curiosity about and openness toward the outside world. Building on a Vedic basis and on Mauryan integration, numerous new external influences were added, processed, assimilated, and transformed in a typical Indian way, so that with the Guptas a completely new India emerged, the so-called "Classical India" of our historians. Some of the influences and reactions against them that were at work during the half millennium "between the empires" preceding the emergence of the great Gupta culture will be investigated here.

BACKGROUND: THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

The invasions by foreign peoples from the northwest seen during the period under discussion are not as unique as they may appear. Some occurred during the preceding late Vedic and early historical periods. For example, it is clear, in spite of our lacunar sources, that the Salva tribe immigrated in late Vedic times but was "Vedicized" within approximately one century and took over the four-class system (*varṇa*).[1] Likewise, the tribal polities of the Sakya, Malla, Vajji, etc., who immigrated from the Greater Panjab into eastern north India (northern Bihar) in late Vedic times, no longer appear as outsiders by the time of the Buddha but already as typical Vedicized Indians. In fact, the various small tribal kingdoms of northern India (the sixteen *janapadas* of the Buddhist texts) remained ethnically and socially quite diverse, especially those in Kosala and Videha (Vajji, Malla, Buli, Sakya, etc.). In the second half of the first millennium BCE, the culture and social order of these diverse polities were quickly, if superficially, overlaid by the emerging Magadha and Mauryan realms.

1 See the (customarily) overspeculative article by Parpola (2002) on the Pāṇḍavas.

In the west, the expanding Persian Empire established a foothold in Gandhāra and soon added Sindh (530–519 BCE). Unfortunately, our sources have little to say about the Persian domination of western South Asia. Archaeology, too, has supplied few data so far, such as those from the excavation of Taxila's Bhir Mound. Our data become more copious only with the invasion of Alexander in 326 BCE. Apparently, Persian rule had only superficially overlaid local cultures, and much of the older structures survived. The satrapy of Gandhāra was perhaps administered by native princes (as seen in the reports of Alexander's campaign), governing under a nominal Persian *satrap*, while in nearby Bactria things may have been very different (Shaked 2004). Such local chieftains were called *rāja* by Pāṇini[2] and "kings" by the Greeks. However, even then, strong Persian cultural influence is evident and will be discussed below.

Similarly, the expanding Magadha Empire, under its Nanda (Mahāpadma Nanda, 364 BCE) and Maurya kings, initially represented nothing but a thin overlay over the traditional monarchical (Kosala) and oligarchic (Vajji) configurations. In spite of its bureaucratic setup that is clearly apparent in Greek records of Candragupta Maurya's time (Megasthenes's *Indika*, circa 300 BCE), this large pan-Indian empire quickly disintegrated after Aśoka's death, and the older regional structures reasserted themselves. They are of particular interest for this study, as each one of the successor states followed individual trends and selected individual solutions for social, religious, and literary problems and traditions.

Supplanting the remnants of Maurya rule, the Śuṅga established themselves in the north Indian plains and in western India (Ujjain). Though they are little attested in inscriptions and coinage, they loom large in the literary texts, especially their powerful general (*senāpati*) and later King Puṣyamitra, a brahmin (circa 150 BCE, see below), who reigned from Vidiśā. The Śuṅga had to fight with the central Indian kingdom of Vidarbha (Berar, Nagpur) and perhaps also with the Kaliṅgas of Orissa, and they soon were pushed back and confined to Magadha. Their collapse allowed the reemergence of various regional polities, such as those of Mathurā, Kausambi, Ayodhya, and interestingly, also tribal states in the northwest and in the northeast of the Gangetic plains.[3] The result of this splintering, a vast array of polities, is similar to the pre-Magadha/Nanda period, and may well reflect the situation described by the post-Mauryan layers of the *Arthaśāstra*, with its ever-enlarging circles of foes and friends surrounding a particular kingdom.[4] This setup increased the vulnerability of the Indian

[2] In the case of the *Kamboja*, Pāṇ. 4.1.175; the Greek writers mention kings such as Abisares, Taxiles, Poros, etc, see below n. 11; however see now Shaked 2004 for Bactria.

[3] Arjuneya southeast of Mathurā, Kuninda between the Beas and Yamunā, Audumbara in the northern tracts between Beas und Ravi, Trigarta between Ravi and Sutlej, the warring tribe of the Yaudheya, known already to Pāṇini, between Sutlej und Yamunā (Haryana), and west of them the Agastya.

[4] The *mitra-amitra-mitra* scheme; this system was seriously out of date already by the time of the imperial state of the Mauryas. It could then only reflect that of the already distant late Vedic period. Indeed, the concentric circles of enemies and friends are presaged by the description in *BŚS* 12.19:115.18sqq. (see n. 137). However, the chaotic post-Maurya period encouraged such a scheme again (see n. 121).

polity and allowed for a series of invasions from the northwest, out of Afghanistan (Bactrian Greeks, Saka, Parthians, Yue-Zhi/Kushana).

Because of Greek and Roman sources as well as due to copious finds of coins, we are fairly well informed about the northwest. After Alexander's brief interlude and a clash between the Mauryas and Seleucids in 305 BCE, the northwest and Afghanistan became Mauryan territory but then fell to the Bactrian Greeks, who staged several raids into the northwest and finally established their own kingdom on Indian soil under Demetrios and Menandros, the Buddhist "Milinda" (circa 150 BCE). Menandros led forays to Ayodhya (Sāketa), Ujjain (Mādhyamikā), and apparently also into the heartland of the Maurya, to Patna (Pāṭaliputra). In the east, Kalinga, that had been subdued by Aśoka after a long war, quickly regained independence and became an important kingdom under its Mahāmeghavāhana Dynasty. Its third king, Khāravela, has left us the important Hathigumpha inscription that was intentionally placed next to one of Aśoka. He asserts, already in the hyperbolic style of later inscriptions, to have fought against the kings of the western Deccan, Magadha, the Greeks in the northwest, and the Pāṇḍya in the south. However, two centuries later, Plinius (23–79 CE) reports that the *Calingae* were split up into several smaller states.

In western India, the north Iranian Śaka, coming out of Bactria and Sistan (Sakastān), established the Kṣatrapa realm in Sindh and Gujarat, which often was more of a federation of tribal chiefdoms than a unified state. Their most famous king, Rudradāman, reigned over Sindh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, the Narmada valley, the western Deccan, and Konkan.

The bulk of the Deccan, however, was occupied by his foes, the Śātavāhana or Āndhra Dynasty, with their capital at Paithan (Pratiṣṭhāna). The region reached a high standard of culture, visible in art (Amarāvatī *stūpa*) and Prākṛt literature (Hāla's *Satasā*). Their first king, Simuka, is said to have fought and overcome the Śuṅga. However, the Śātavāhanas were involved in prolonged warfare with their new western neighbors the Śaka, until the Śātavāhana king Gautamīputra Śātakarni and his son Vāsiṣṭhīputra could reconquer the western Deccan during the first half of the second century CE. Their realm is characterized by incipient "feudalism."

Southern India entered the light of history about the same time. Four southern tribes are mentioned by Aśoka (Pāṇḍya, Coḷa, Keralaputta or Cera, and the Satiyaputta). After the "discovery" of the monsoon trade winds around 50 CE, direct overseas trade with Roman Egypt brought a great amount of wealth into the area, visible in the finds of many stamped-over Roman gold coins. Important port towns were Berenike (Quseir) in southern Egypt; on the Indian west coast Barygaza (Bhṛgukaccha, Broach), Sopara (Śūrpāraka); further south the recently discovered Muziris in Kerala (perhaps Pattanam near Paravoor, Kodungallur-Chettuva area); and on the east coast, Arikamedu (Pondicherry); and Kaverīpaṭṭanam/Pulhār that is mentioned in Sangam literature as founded by King Karikāl.

BACKGROUND: FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Persian Influence

Persian cultural influence on India, including that emanating from the Near East, is visible in some new ideas in public administration, road building, town planning, public buildings, and Persian eclectic art, that is seen in Aśoka's pillar capitals. However, the most important and lasting impact was the introduction of writing in Gandhāra and the Panjab. While the new South Asian writing system was inspired by the invention of the cuneiform syllabary for Old Persian, the new Kharoṣṭhī script was based on an actual Semitic alphabet, Aramaic; furthermore, it included an important innovation, the addition of individual vowel signs. It was now possible to write any contemporary Indian text (in MIA/Prākṛt) without much ambiguity.[5] The Persians also instigated canon formation of native religious texts within their realm, from the Avesta to the Bible and the Veda, the latter based on earlier oral-based attempts by the Śakala clan.[6]

Such foreign influences need not always have taken place directly. In the vast areas east of the Persian realm, it may have been sufficient to hear legends and merchant tales from the "west," of the type reported by Herodotus about India. This scenario should not be underestimated. Ideas about a contemporary "modern" system of government and administration may thus have reached eastern north India where, during the fifth century BCE, the tribal country of Magadha turned directly from a pre-state chiefdom to an aggressive state that was based on direct administration, not on tribal loyalties. One must, however, distinguish between, on the one hand, local developments, local trends, and internal pressures, and on the other, the adaptation of "fashionable" trappings that came from the outside. Direct influence of the Persian Empire on Indian culture is visible only in the northwest, such as at Taxila. The great grammarian Pāṇini, who came from Śalātura, a village near the confluence of the Kabul and Indus rivers, mentions some such cases in his grammar, most important the two words for "writing" *lipi/libi*,[7] or *Yavana* "Greek" seen in *yavanikā*, or East Iranian *kanthika* "citizen."[8] Despite the open and international environment in Gandhāra, Pāṇini remained a traditional scholar closely allied with late Vedic culture: he does not mention Prākṛt, Iranian, or other foreign languages but teaches the Vedic language

[5] The lack of long vowels in Kharoṣṭhī remained one such ambiguity. the origin of the name *Kharoṣṭhī* remains unexplained; it may have originated as a nickname taken from the description of the northwestern people/script: see *MBh* 8.30.11: *pancānāṃ sindhuṣaṣṭhānāṃ nadīnāṃ ye 'ntar . . .* 16–17 *hasanti gānti nṛtyanti strībhir mattā vivāsasaḥ . . . mattāvagītair vividhaiḥ kharoṣṭraninadopamaiḥ.*

[6] See Witzel 1989 for Śakala, and on canon formation see Witzel and Farmer forthcoming.

[7] From O. Persian *dipi*, pronounced with a spirant (*δipi*) and East Iran.**lipi/libi; dipi* is attested in Aśoka's inscriptions.

[8] Attested for Varṇu (mod. Bannu), see names such as *Samar-kand* = Greek *Marakanda.*

(*chandas*)[9] next to the elevated and the colloquial language (*bhāṣā*) of Gandhāra.[10] Therefore, it cannot be observed in Pāṇini that Persian officials of his homeland used a Semitic alphabet and wrote in a form of Imperial Aramaic. He also did not take note, just like Patañjali a few hundred years later, of the presence of Iranian speakers, though he mentions the name of a border area, Varṇu (Bannu), or of Kāpiśa near Kabul, and though he knew still of a "king" of the neighboring Kamboja land, an Iranian area in eastern Afghanistan that spoke late Avestan.[11]

Just as can be observed in Pāṇini's grammar, the influence of Persian culture became very well integrated with the general Indian background, and, therefore is not immediately recognizable. For example, there are a number of early "Sanskritized" loan words from Persian: *pustaka* "book, manuscript," *divira* "writer," *mudrā* "seal, coin," *karṣa* "a weight," *bandī* "female slave" (Middle Persian *bandag*, New Persian *banda*),[12] even *pīlu* "elephant" (Old Persian *pīru*, New Persian *pīl*).[13]

The introduction of writing in Persian times had, according to a recent theory (Witzel and Farmer, forthcoming), important direct and indirect repercussions on canon formation in India.[14] There was imperial Persian pressure on formulating an "official" written canon, from Asia Minor, Egypt, and Israel up to the Zoroastrians and the Veda.[15] However, in India, we can also observe a countermove, the *oral* formulation of Sanskrit grammar by Pāṇini.[16] The role of the Panjab clan of the Śakalas[17] is crucial, who had recently migrated into Bihar,[18] in formulating a canonic text of the Ṛgveda, which resulted in the Padapāṭha text of Śākalya. This may be understood as the result of a "billiard ball" effect, originating from the Panjab and

[9] Note the same term in the Buddhist canon, supposedly at Buddha's time: *chandasi aropetam*, which means that (Vedic style) Sanskrit was to be avoided; see Norman 1980.

[10] His homeland was known in the later Veda (*KB* 7.7.36–39) for its high linguistic standards. Certainly, its fame was part and parcel of the origin of the Jātaka tales of Taxila as a "university." See Witzel et al., forthcoming.

[11] As is evident from the pronunciation of the Kamboja word [*śavati*], with palatal *ś*, as *śavati* in Patañjali and Yāska; it reflects Young Avestan *šauuaiti* < IIr. **cyavati/e*. Kamboja may have been the title of the Persian crown prince, whence he perhaps got the name Cambyses (Old Pers. *Kambaujiya*); not the same practice of naming kings after their ancestors/tribal names in north India (*Paurava* > Gr. Pōros, *Abhisāra* > Abisarēs, *Takṣaśila* > Taxilēs, etc.).

[12] Thieme 1937, 91; see *bandī* Manu 3.158.

[13] In Patañjali, *pīlu* "elephant" is not found; instead, it is the name of a tree: 7.2.74: 268.9 : *pīlu vṛkṣaḥ. pīlu phalam.*

[14] Writing is little attested in the epics; however, Hiltebeitel (2004 and see 2001: 100) points to *MBh* 1.1.208, where it is said that the *MBh* weighs more than the four Vedas.; note *MBh* 13.24.70, where the "sellers of the Vedas, corrupters of the Vedas and those who write the Vedas, these surely go to hell" (Hiltebeitel 2004).

[15] The later parts of which, like the Upaniṣads, should be dated around 500 BCE or 400 BCE.

[16] The first preserved grammar, after a dozen predecessors quoted by Pāṇini.

[17] See *AB* 3.43 (Śakala, the author of a Sāman, *JB* 3.93; Śakala Gaupāyana *JB* 1.258: §92); the area is that of modern *Sial-koṭ*, Greek *Saggala.*

[18] See Witzel 1989, 1997.

ending up with purposeful Veda import by Videha chieftains such as Janaka. The western, Kuru model of ritual and society is clearly seen in the Late Vedic, Sanskritizing east: we find canonization, with fixed texts and uniform rituals, only in a relatively late period, around the middle of the first millennium BCE.

Greek Influence

After Alexander, Greek cultural influence grew in Afghanistan, the Panjab, and Sindh, but especially so in Bactria. It was due to the many towns ("Alexandria") that he had "founded" and settled with retired soldiers and their Greek administrators. In India, Greek cultural influence is also seen in a number of early loan words, mostly taken from the military sphere, such as *suruṅga* "underground passage, tunnel used in sieges" < Greek *sûrinx*, *khalīna* "horse bit" < *khalīnós*, *paristoma* "blanket" < *perístrōma*, *keṇikā* "tent" < *skēnḗ*," *kastīra* "tin" < *kassíteros*). In the cultural realm, there are words such as *melā* < *méla* "ink," or *kalama* < *kálamos* "pen" (made from reed stems), *drammaka* < *drakhmḗ* "a coin," *marakata* "emerald" < *(s)máragdos*, *kimpala* < *kúmbalon* "cymbal."[19] Even the typical Hellenistic royal title *sotēr* "savior" was translated as *trātṛ* or *trātara*.[20]

The *Mahābhārata* speaks positively about the learning (*sarvajña*)[21] and the technology of the "clean shaved" (*muṇḍa*) Greeks (Yavana), but also much more negatively about their lack of the four-class system (*varṇa*) and, instead, their society composed just of free men and slaves. Well into the first millennium CE, Greek women were chosen as royal bodyguards, and a Kashmirian comedy of the fifth century (Śyāmilaka's *Pādataḍitaka*) jokes about the intolerable language of the Greek hetaeras, with their all too frequent *s*-sounds. *Yavana*, the original designation of these prominent western neighbors of India, became the designation of all subsequent western foreigners, i.e., Muslims, Turks, Mongols, and Europeans.

Greek influence also includes that on Gandhara art and the Hellenistic-Roman architecture that was particularly influential in Kashmir. Hellenistic influences were especially pronounced in neighboring Arsacide Iran (247 BCE–224 CE), which acted, in part, as intermediary after the downfall of the Bactrian and Indian Greek kingdoms.

Central Asian Influence

The influence of other Iranian and Central Asian peoples (north Iranian, Śaka, Yue-Ji/Kushana) is difficult to gauge but it appears early on in the clothes, customs, and

19 Astronomical terms were taken over only after the beginning of the first millennium CE, with the growing influence of Graeco-Babylonian astronomy in India; they include words such as those for sun, hour (*horā*), center of a circle (*kendra*), diameter, and loan words or loan translations for the twelve zodiac signs.

20 See however the Prakrit forms *soṭira*, *soḍira* > Sanskrit *śauṭīra* "hero, noble man" (*MBh*) 9.63.1; *śauṭīra-māni-putra*, 12.118.25; *śauṭīrāḥ*, 12.98.25; *śauṭīrāṇām aśauṭīram adharmyam kṛpaṇam*, 12.84.4 *śauṭīre*; not in *Rām*.

21 Cf. *mlecchācāryāḥ* 12.4.8; cf. also *mlechavāc* 1.135.6; see Brockington 1998: 212.

habits of the Gandhāra people. Herodotus[22] likens them to the Bactrians. Such influence increased under the Śaka and Kushana, from dress to language and religion, which included not only the successful export of Buddhism to Central Asia but a also a certain amount of backflow into the subcontinent. We still are in need of a comprehensive collection of the relevant data. Bactrian loan words include such words as *bakanapati* "shrine attendant" and *horaka* "donor."

Roman Trade

Another powerful source of foreign influences was long-range trade. Under the early Roman emperors, trade with India increased enormously. The "discovery" of the seasonal monsoon winds in the Arab Sea greatly furthered maritime trade with direct overseas voyages between Egypt and India. The itinerary to India is described in the *Periplous of the Eritrean Sea*. It was composed around 50 CE. The unknown author describes the monsoon winds, allegedly discovered by the Greek Hippalos (circa 46 CE) and the routes between Egypt (Berenike) and India: Gujarat (Broach, Sopara), Kerala (Muziris), and Tamil Nadu (Arikamedu, Kaverīpaṭṭana, Uraiyur). This trade was especially prominent under the Kushanas, then petered off due to internal troubles of the Roman economy.

Recently, the south Egyptian port of Berenike (Quseir) has been excavated; rich trade goods and early Tamil inscriptions have been found. On the Indian side, the excavations at Arikamedu (Pondicherry) as well as at Muziris have provided further evidence. The early Tamil Sangam texts speak about the Yavanas, their sailing ships, and their habit of drinking wine. Such wine amphorae have indeed been found, and there are well over one hundred find spots of Roman coins. Representation of foreigners appears in art at Mathurā[23] and at Bharhut.[24]

Regular overland trade, too, was furthered by the Kushana due to their Central Asian and Middle Eastern connections. There was an almost direct connection between Kushana Central Asia, via the Oxus which then flowed into the Caspian Sea, and Roman Armenia and Crimea. Not as many gold coins have been found in northern

22 See his hearsay descriptions (see n. 115) of Gandhāra in *Histories* III 97sqq. There are many Indian peoples, different in language: river people, nomads (*Pandaioi*), vegetarians, Aithiopians (black, straight hair), Indians in the south who are not Persian subjects, Indians near Kaspatyros and Paktyika who "live similar to the Bactrians"; note the famous "gold-digging ants." Conversely, Indian cultural influence is of course also seen acting on the West, i.e., in Persia and beyond. It is not limited to trade, e.g., *oryza* "rice" from the Drav. *arici*, "beryl" and German *Brille* "eyeglasses," from Sanskrit *vaidūrya*, camphor from Sanskrit *karpūra*, Greek *karpasos* "cotton" from Sanskrit *karpāsa*, etc. However, apart from Pāṇini, we cannot discern direct reactions to the influences coming in from the west (via/from Persia), as we do not have contemporary northwestern Indian texts: the Buddhist and the late Vedic texts are from eastern India; the epic has some reflections of the northwest (see below n. 108, on *MBh* 8.30), but it was still under composition at the time in question.

23 Note S. Quintanilla 1999 on Mathurā art.

24 Note the depictions of some foreigners in ships at Bharhut, or of the "taxi" at Mathurā around the beginning of our era, at Sanchi/Amaravati, and later in the cave paintings of Ajanta.

India as in the south. The policy of the Kushana was to melt them down and to issue their own coinage. Because of the craze of Roman women for glamorous foreign fashion, such as silk, large amounts of gold went to India. Plinius (first century CE) complains of 100 million sesterces per year, though this loss may have been made up by import taxes levied, e.g., at Berenike.[25]

Southeast Asia

We hear comparatively little about Southeast Asia. Some Indian words for imported goods came from Southeast Asia, such as that for camphor (*karpūra*) that came from Malaya, while sandalwood and cinnamon came from Indonesia. Trade with Southeast Asia soon resulted in strong Indian cultural influence, which was important in the onset of local state formation—a replay of the situation in south India.

The preceding section, it is hoped, has set the stage for gauging the Indian reaction to foreign influences which will be taken up below, after taking a closer look at reactions to religious developments. Due to limitations of space, the discussion will be restricted, by and large,[26] to the early part of the period between the empires, circa 230–50 BCE.

POLITICAL USAGES OF RELIGION, LANGUAGE, AND SCRIPT

Aśoka and the Mauryas

Aśoka has been portrayed as a Buddhist emperor who used religion as a means of internal and foreign policy and who sent missionaries to Sri Lanka and to the Hellenistic West. To be able to use Buddhism in diplomacy and as a cultural tool at home, he had to regulate and organize it. His well-known interference in the internal affairs of Buddhism—suggested by Kauṭilya for all religions—is obvious in orchestrating the Buddhist council of Pāṭaliputra, where the texts were officially canonized. It is also seen in propagating his religion (*dhamma*)—whether indeed entirely Buddhist or not—in many inscriptions, and by establishing officers for its supervision and spread.

The reactions against the Mauryan use of Buddhism can be observed on several levels. On the political one, this is most obvious in the choice of religion and language made by the successor dynasties to the Mauryas, as seen in their inscriptions. These rulers, and those of neighboring kingdoms, who came from widely different, often low-class or foreign backgrounds, tried to legitimize their rule, and in doing so, they tried to distinguish themselves from their immediate neighbors by their individual choice of preferred religion, official language, type of script used, etc.

25 Next to native Indian silk. In the same way, many goods, fruits, and plants arrived in Europe, as even today their names indicate: "peach" of Latin *malum persicum*, German *Pfirsich*, "Persian apple," etc. (see n. 22). Some these goods did not originate from India but came to Rome, as Strabo (63 BCE–21 CE) reported, via Sri Lanka.

26 Except for some short summaries.

Śuṅga

In the following period, that of the Bactrian Greeks and Śuṅga (circa 150 CE), the configuration of states and the inherent antagonisms were different ones. The Greeks in the northwest, up to Sāketa (Ayodhya) and Mādhyamikā (Ujjain), wrote in Greek and in local Prākṛts (using Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī), as is evident in their coins, while the "nationalistic" Hindu Śuṅga rulers wrote in the local Prākṛts using Brāhmī script (while a few of their subjects even used more or, rather, less correct Sanskrit). As is common throughout Indian history, the Greeks adjusted, to some extent, to the local religions such as Buddhism or emerging Vaiṣṇavism (Heliodoros's inscription, see n. 123) However, while some of the Greeks, such as Menandros, apparently favored Buddhism, the Śuṅgas clearly stressed traditional Vedic/Hindu religion.

They represent the most interesting case of reactions to internal developments and external influences. The Śuṅgas did away with the last Maurya king about 150 BCE. The usurper, the general Puṣyamitra, was of brahmin stock.[27] Therefore, it is not surprising that he followed traditional Vedic religion closely. He even revived the great horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) and had it carried out twice (*dvir-aśvamedha-yājin*, Ayodhya inscription of Dhanadeva).[28] His close adherence to Vedic ritual is also seen in the grammatical example of Patañjali, his contemporary: "here we offer for Puṣyamitra."[29] One wonders when the horse sacrifice had last been performed, centuries ago.[30] As is well known, during an Aśvamedha, all neighboring kings and princes must recognize the overlordship of the sacrificing king. The Greeks in the Panjab will hardly have worried about it, albeit for political reasons: they may have obstructed Puṣyamitra's claim of "universal" overlordship.[31]

Buddhist tradition depicts Puṣyamitra as a fanatical opponent of Buddhism. He is said to have destroyed 84,000 *stūpas* allegedly built by Aśoka. Some of this may be based on facts. Patañjali (*Mahābhāṣya* 5.3.99: 429.3) seems to reflect some of the brahmanical animosity toward the Mauryas when he says that they made (deity) images for the sake of silver, apparently intending the Mauryan silver coins.[32] On the other hand, Buddhism continued to flourish even in the heart of the Śuṅga realm,

27 It must not surprise that brahmins could function as generals. This has been the case even in medieval times (as seen in the Rājataraṅgiṇīs of Kashmir). Note that the Purāṇas do not complain about the brahmin king Puṣyamitra, but do so about śūdra kings.

28 See Sircar 1965: 94 no. 9; note also Patañjali, *MBh* 3.2.123: II.123.2–124.13 *iha puṣyamitram yājayāmaḥ*; see 3.1.26.4: II.33.21–34.7; 1.1.68.3: I.176.25–177.16 *puṣyamitrasabhā*.

29 *Yajāmaḥ*, Pat. 3.1.26.4: 33.21–34.7. The use of *yaj* indicates Vedic rituals, not the common *pūjā*-like rituals.

30 Now and then, kings have celebrated it even in the Middle Ages; the last one was carried out at Jaipur around 1740 CE.

31 On the other hand, Patañjali bitterly deplores that, for a long time, nobody was ready to perform "thousand-year" rituals! Who may have done so before him?

32 Pat. 5.3.99: II.429.2–4 *apaṇya iti ucyate. tatra idaṃ na sidhyati. śivaḥ. skandaḥ. viśākha iti. kim kāraṇam? Mauryair hiraṇyārthibhir arcāḥ prakalpitā. bhavet. tāsu na syāt. yās tv etāḥ saṃprati-pūjārthās tāsu bhaviṣyati.* (Is this one of the many puns of the grammarians, here on the successor of Aśoka, Samprati?)

where large monuments such as the *stūpa* of Bharhut were built.[33] Brahmanical reactions will be dealt with in some detail below.

Khāravela and the Mahāmeghavāhanas of Orissa

The Śuṅga and their many local (sub)dynasties[34] were opposed by the Mahāmeghavāhanas of Orissa. Their most important king, Khāravela was, in contrast to Aśoka and Puṣyamitra, an adherent of Jainism.[35] In his famous Hathigumpha inscription he claims to have fought with the kings of the western Deccan, Magadha, the Greeks in the northwest and the Pāṇḍyas in the deep south. He claims to have conquered Magadha and to have brought back a Jaina statute that had been taken away, centuries earlier, by the Nandas. This seemingly incidental link with earlier imperial history is reinforced by the fact that his inscription is put up close to a rock inscription of Aśoka.

Khāravela wrote in a general, noneastern Prākṛt that differed considerably from Aśoka's chancellery Māgadhī, and he used a form of the Brāhmī script. As far as I see, his surprising use of an old form of *western* Prākṛt in Orissa (where Eastern Middle Indo-Aryan was spoken, just as it was in Magadha) has not been properly explained.[36] It is obvious that he wanted to avoid the eastern Prākṛt of Magadha, as this was the language of the enemy. However, the same kind of early western Prākṛt as used in Orissa was also employed in the Sātavāhana realm and by the Kṣatrapa rulers of the western Deccan (below). The obvious reason would be opposition to the Magadha-based chancellery Prākṛt of the Mauryas. However, the widespread use of a western form of Prākṛt in "middle India" was probably due to the cultural and political influence of the Sātavāhana, who used this particular dialect, as is visible in their inscriptions, down to the Pallavas, in the middle of the first millennium CE. As for Khāravela, he found other ways to distinguish his official culture from that of the Sātavāhanas, namely, his stress of Jainism (see above, n. 35).

33 Its reliefs are, to a large extent, our first nonliterary sources for the culture of the period: their detailed figurative representations are important sources for early India, especially so as they do not only represent Buddhist mythology but also many details of daily life; thus, they are a kind of encyclopedia, which actually should be used and evaluated more than has been done so far.

34 It is surprising how little the name "Śuṅga" was actually used in epigraphy and on coins. So far, there seems to be only one inscription (Sircar 1965: 94, no. 9) that mentions them expressly. However, note the attested lineage-based names of kings in *-mitra*, beginning with the first Śuṅga, Puṣyamitra, as opposed to *-deva* at Ayodhyā; this is common practice in royal names.

35 Note his donations such as those in his eighth regal year for Brahmins and Jainas and in his thirteenth year for Jainas.

36 Instead, one has built grandiose theories on the use of this form of Prākṛt in Orissa, such as the supposition of an "eastern nature" of canonical Pāli, against the preponderance of the evidence that indicates western features of the underlying dialect of Pāli.

Śaka and Kṣatrapa of Western India

In the west, the Śuṅga were in conflict with the Śakas who had invaded South Asia via Bactria and Sistan (Sakastāna), after circa 140 BCE. One group of the Śakas conquered Sindh and Gujarat, as Jaina sources tell us. Their Iranian connections are highlighted by the name of their rulers, the Kṣatrapa (cf. Old Iranian *xšaϑra-* "domination"), and by the individual names of kings and officials.[37] Their most famous king was Rudradāman (circa 150 CE). He ruled over Sindh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, the Narmadā valley, western Deccan, and Konkan. We do not know his original name (his relatives still have Iranian ones), but his throne name, "garland of Rudra" (Śiva), clearly indicates his pro-Hindu and pro-Sanskrit stance.

His inscription at Junagarh in the Girnar hills of Saurāṣṭra is well known as the first long inscription in classical Sanskrit. It inaugurates the *praśasti* style of writing introductory sections to royal inscriptions in a highly poetical and hyperbolic style. Importantly, it was he, a "foreign" ruler with a Sanskrit name, belonging to the Iranian Kṣatrapas, who chose to write in Sanskrit. This was a clear break with the tradition of writing in various Prākṛts that went back some 400 years, all the way to Aśoka, and it certainly was not done without reasons. Rudradāman's eastern neighbors and competitors, the Śātavāhana, too, were promoting Brahmanism, but they continued to write in a traditional Prākṛt. How better to distinguish oneself than by one-upmanship, that is, by writing in highly polished Sanskrit? As can frequently be observed later, all throughout the Middle Ages, outsiders chose to follow local, native tradition and religion strenuously as they wanted to legitimize themselves in the eyes of their subjects (and neighbors).[38] In the Deccan, the Kṣaharāta prince Nahapāna, in his Nasik inscription (circa 119–124, Sircar 1965: 167sq.), tried to imitate the classical Sanskrit used by their Kṣatrapa neighbors.[39] Not with much success: after a few lines he quickly fell back into the traditional Prākṛt. It seems that a certain amount of pressure existed to conform with the growing trend of composing[40] and writing in Sanskrit.

Finally, Rudradāman, just like Khāravela, sought to connect himself with the

37 Whose officials and family members still had Iranian names (Caṣṭana, Zamotika, in Sircar 1965: 173 no. 63–66, 175 no. 67; and see Rudradāman's inscription with: *Aśoka Mauryasya yavanarājena Tuṣ[ā]sphena Puṣpaguptena kāritam*; an imitation of a Greek coin with Greek characters is still seen under him (Sircar 1965:180 no. 68).

38 E.g., the Hun Mihirakula in Kashmir, see *Rājataraṅgiṇī* 1.289sqq. and the report of the pilgrim Song Yun (Kuwayama 1967: 153sqq.). Nevertheless, Rudradāman was not the first who has left inscriptions in Sanskrit. In the Mathurā area, controlled by the Śaka, there were some brahmins who wrote in Sanskrit already around the beginning of our era—while the Śaka themselves used the native dialect. See now Salomon (1998: 89) on supposed Mathurā Śaka influence on the Sanskrit movement in Gujarat. The evidence of the usage of Sanskrit by brahmins, combined with what Patañjali has to say about proper language (see below), seems to argue against this supposition.

39 The first (Sanskrit) half of the inscription is in fact a "reproduction in Sanskrit orthography" of his Karle inscription written in Prākṛt, as Senart put it (see Salomon 1998: 89; Sircar 1965: 171 no. 61).

40 By that time, texts such as Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*, the *Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra*, Bhāsa's dramas, etc. had been composed; Sanskrit has been used in Mathurā as well (though by brahmins). See Salomon 1998: 89.

imperial tradition by choosing Junagarh as the place of his inscription: the area has an Aśokan inscription.[41] This stance is further underlined by his expressly mention of repairing the local dam that had been repaired by the Mauryas, centuries earlier. The method is clear: stressing earlier imperial links, choosing Sanskrit as the emerging language of prestige, and linking oneself to Brahmanical traditions.

Sātavāhana of the Upper Deccan

In the upper south (Deccan), the Kṣatrapas were opposed by the Śātavāhanas. As has been mentioned, their inscriptions are written in a conservative western, almost Pāli-like, Prākṛt dialect[42] that is also used by the Mahāmeghavāhanas. However, the Śātavāhanas stressed traditional Vedic/Hindu religion in their inscriptions,[43] in opposition to the Jainism professed by their Orissan neighbors.

Interestingly, the use of a western conservative Prākṛt created a break, in the Deccan, with that of the eastern chancellery language used by Aśoka that he had even employed further south, all over Dravidian Andhra and Karnataka. Apparently the Śātavāhanas promoted Prākṛt not just in their inscriptions but also in literature. The poet Hāla composed his *Satasaī* in Māhārāṣṭrī, the contemporary local southern form of Middle Indo-Aryan of the second–third centuries CE,[44] that is phonetically much more developed than the inscriptional Prākṛts of the time.

The Śātavāhana kings clearly sponsored brahmins (though the famous inscriptions and cave sanctuaries of the western Deccan, paid for by their subjects, are clear testimony to the flourishing state of Buddhism of the time). Thus, it is typical that Gautamīputra took pride in claiming to have furthered the brahmins and to have ended the "mixture of classes"(*varṇa*). This is a topos that is found throughout the Middle Ages, and it was especially used by each first king of a new dynasty who had to establish himself and had to justify his rule. The Śātavāhana kings also gave away hundreds and thousands of cows to brahmins,[45] as well as land. Some of the earliest attested donations of land are mentioned under these kings.

Southernmost India

South India obviously was to far off for the Śuṅgas and their Kāṇva successors to play

41 See, later on, the case of Samudragupta.

42 Preceding the use of the much more deviating and later Māhārāṣṭrī of Hāla, with its typical loss of intervocalic consonants. The Śātavāhana inscriptions (that use a general, educated western Prākṛt) still show such consonants intact, see their inscriptions in Sircar 1965: 189sqq. no. 75–89.

43 Their subjects often were Buddhist, see the inscriptions at Karle, etc.; and even some inscriptions of the Śātavāhanas (e.g., Sircar 1965: 200sqq. no. 84, 86, etc.) are written in the same Prākṛt dialect.

44 See Hinüber 1986: 47.

45 See the Nānāghāṭ cave inscription put up by Nāgāmnika (circa 50 BCE), according to Sircar 1965: 192sqq. a member of the Śātavāhana Dynasty. The rituals include the Agnyādheya, Aśvamedha (twice), Bhagāla-Daśātirātra, Gargātrirātra, Aptoryāma, Śatātirātra, Chandoma-Pavamānātirātra, Aṅgirasātirātra, Trayodaśarātra, with *dakṣiṇās* from twelve up to 20,000 cows; see n. 57.

a role in the web of interrelations and Kauṭilyan machinations, but it was not so for the Mahāmeghavāhana of Orissa, who claimed to have invaded and defeated the three chiefdomships of the deep south. Megasthenes (circa 300 BCE) mentioned one southern tribal state (Pāṇḍya), and Aśoka knew of four (Pāṇḍya, Coḷa, Keralaputta or Cera, and Satiyaputta). The increasing trade with the Roman west brought great wealth to the south, and kings such as Karikāl built the first large port cities, referred to in the Sangam literature while mentioning *Yavana* traders in their large ships anchoring at Puhār/Kaverīpaṭṭanam.

The peoples of the lower peninsula possessed traditions quite different from those of the Deccan and the north. Their chieftains and people largely followed their own Tamil traditions in religion and literature. However, Jainism made early inroads from Karnataka, as witnessed by Proto-Kannada loans in the Jaina cave inscriptions of the deep south.[46] Later on, Buddhism followed in the footsteps of Jainism (e.g., the *Maṇimekalai* story of the early centuries CE). Sangam literature also mentions brahmins; however, they appear as quite unorthodox and must rather have been early adventurers looking for a job (which they also did in contemporary Southeast Asia). They appear at the courts of the early Tamil kings, as just *one* type of priests, next to traditional Tamil ones.

Typically, though Jainism thrived both in Orissa and in the south, the rulers of Orissa and of the Tamil country differed in their use of language: while the Mahāmeghavāhanas used a traditional western Prākṛt, the southern chiefs, monks, and commoners preferred their native archaic Tamil. This had been spoken and used in Tamil Nadu and Kerala from the earliest inscriptions (second century BCE) onward. Though the use of language and religion, in the few semiofficial southern inscriptions that we have so far, is not as deliberate as in the Deccan and the north, it is clear that the southern chiefdoms were set apart and, as we can observe in Sangam texts, saw themselves culturally, linguistically, and politically opposed to their immediate neighbors in the north, the Śātavāhana/Āndhra Dynasty and the Mahāmeghavāhanas of Orissa.

An Overview of State-Level Political, Cultural, and Religious Competition

As mentioned above, as far as I can see, the combination and the individual choice of (some of) the strategies used in the cultural and religious arena by the various rulers "between the empires" have not been observed by historians;[47] a brief discussion is therefore appended here.

46 In the Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions ed. and trans. by Iravatham Mahadevan, HOS 63, 2003.

47 These strategies and tactics were continued throughout the Middle Ages by individual choice of rulers for one of the larger "sects" (Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Saurya, etc.) and by invitation of brahmins from varying, nonlocal backgrounds (see Witzel 1986).

The Early Period: Greek and Mauryas

To begin with, the (chiefly) Buddhist[48] Mauryas (circa 321–150 BCE), wrote in their local eastern Prākṛt in Brāhmī script,[49] or to be more precise, in the chancellery language of the court at Patna (Hinüber 1986: 27sqq.). This language was used even in the Dravidian part of the empire, in Karnataka and Andhra. Unlike their practice in the heavily foreign-influenced northwest, the Mauryas apparently did not feel it necessary to use the local Dravidian languages.[50] However, it can be easily observed, even in this

TABLE 17.1

Dynasty & area	NORTHWEST GREEKS 327–305/185 BCE Alexander/Seleucids Afghanistan ceded to Mauryas 305 BCE	NORTH & CENTER MAURYA 321 BCE–185 . . . Aśoka -> Dasaratha/Kunala -> Samprati . . . Bṛhadratha
Language Script Religion	Greek & Aramaic Greek & Aramaic Local/ZOROASTRIAN/ GREEK rel.	Patna chancellery Pkt./ local Prakrits Brāhmī, Kharoṣṭhī, Aramaic BUDDHISM; "*dharma*"
Origin of rulers	Macedonian/Greek	Local Moriya tribe
Dynasty & area		THE SOUTH Incipient tribal states: Pāṇḍya, Coḷa, Cera, Satiyaputta
Language Script Religion Origin of rulers		*Archaic Tamil –/– LOCAL DRAV., JAINA Local

[48] It must not be left out of consideration that Aśoka's predecessor Candragupta seems to have become a Jaina, and that some of his successors were not Buddhists, as well.

[49] With the exception of the northwest (Kandahar and Taxila) where the use of Aramaic and Greek was firmly established, and where Greek, Aramaic, and Kharoṣṭhī scripts were employed.

[50] For example, Proto-Kannada is now in evidence in loan words found in some of the Early Tamil inscription in Brāhmī, see Mahadevan 2003. So far we know nothing about the Proto-Telugu of the period.

rather preliminary sketch, that the use of the dominant imperial Māgadhī Prākṛt was opposed, soon after Aśoka, in the deep south by the emerging Tamil chiefdoms, where people wrote in their own language, in archaic Tamil,[51] using the local Tamil variety of Brāhmī script.[52] The propagation of Buddhism (or rather Aśoka's own idea of *dharma*) is well known. In Alexander's realm and the post-Alexandrian Seleucid kingdom, Greek language and culture was promoted next to local (Iranian) culture. Aramaic was the traditional administrative language of the Persian realm; its use in Bactria is now confirmed by new finds (Shakhed 2004) that provide a good understanding of the administrative practices under the Persians. Their continuation in the short Macedonian/Seleucid "interregnum" may be assumed due to Aśoka's Kandahar inscription in Greek and Aramaic, after Afghanistan and Baluchistan were ceded to the Mauryas by the Greeks in 305 BCE.

As for the Indian deep south, we know every little for this period, but it is clear that Jainism was introduced from Karnataka, as is seen in early Kannada loans found in the Tamil Brāhmī inscriptions (Mahadevan 2003). This fact agrees with the traditional Jaina history of a movement of the patriarch Bhadrabāhu, along with the retired king Candragupta Maurya, to Karnataka, circa 297/3 BCE. Apart from these Tamil inscriptions of Jaina monks, the synchronism with the Sangam texts composed in archaic Tamil and the early chronicles of Sri Lanka allow us to posit the contemporaneous existence of archaic Tamil poetry and religion as well as several emerging Tamil states.

Bactrian Greeks, Śuṅga, and the South

The same kind of dichotomy as seen under the Seleucids and Mauryas continued after the takeover of the northwest by the Bactrian Greeks and of the rest of the Mauryan Empire by the Śuṅga and related kings (the Mitras, Devas, etc.). As mentioned, the Bactrian Greeks in India used both the Greek and Kharoṣṭhī scripts. However, they were opposed by a staunchly "Hindu" kingdom, founded by a brahmin general who used, clearly in opposition to the Greeks, the locally developed Brāhmī script, and furthered (post-)Vedic and early Hindu ritualism, but certainly not primarily Buddhism.

The south still is too distant from these areas to play an intrinsic part of these strategies; nevertheless, while a local version of the Brāhmī script was developed and widely used for archaic Tamil, the various forms of local religion are in evidence from the Sangam texts (with some inroads of Jainism out of Karnataka). Both features point

[51] See Mahadevan 2003; cf. the parallel case of the Vedicization of the east of northern India, supposedly by the Ṛṣis Gotama Rāhūgāṇa and Viśvāmitra in *ŚB* and *AB* (see Witzel 2001).

[52] As everywhere, private inscriptions have to be kept apart. These were in the same script and language as the official ones but they were executed for Jaina monks, and they indeed include loanwords from Proto-Kannada, as could be expected, since Jainism had spread into that area, according to Jaina sources, under the patriarch Bhadrabāhu and the retired Maurya emperor Candragupta around 300 BCE.

TABLE 17.2

	185–100 BCE	250/150 BCE–
Dynasty & area	NORTHWEST Greeks in Bactria/Panjab . . . Demetrios, Eukratides, . . . Menandros ~150 BCE	NORTH & CENTER Śuṅga 185 BCE – Puṣyamitra 150 BCE -> Agnimitra
Language Script Religion Origin of rulers	Greek/Local Prakrit Greek, Kharoṣṭhī BUDDHIST, etc. Greeks	Sanskrit/Prakrits Brāhmī HINDU Brahmins (Bharadvāja)
Dynasty & area Language Script Religion Origin of rulers	CENTER Vidarbha kingdom	SOUTH INDIA Incipient states: Pāṇḍya, ... Archaic Tamil Tamil Brāhmī script LOCAL/JAINA local nobility

to a strong south Indian (Tamil) identity that certainly was used by the emerging states to distinguish themselves from their central and north Indian neighbors. The political-cultural picture of cultural competition, however, fully emerges in the ensuing period.

The Competitive Multistate System, circa 100 BCE

With the onset of new invasions from the northwest, northern India was split into a Śaka realm of influence and the continuing Śuṅga/Kāṇva kingdoms further east. Like the Śuṅga, the Kāṇvas were brahmins (belonging to the white Yajurveda) and they seem to have continued the pro-Hindu politics of their predecessors. It even is likely that under their guidance, perhaps in imitation of the first writing down of the Buddhist canon in Sri Lanka at circa 50 BCE, the white Yajurveda was first put into writing (see Witzel 1989, n. 58)—an undertaking that was soon abandoned in favor of the exclusively oral preservation of the texts.

In contrast, the Śakas seem to have favored local religions. In Mathurā, which we know best, inscriptions of Jaina and Buddhist devotees abound (Lüders 1961), but there is very little from brahmins. One of them, the treasurer of the Śaka king Śoṃḍāsa (see n. 78), composed one of the very first Sanskrit inscriptions, at beginning of our era.

TABLE 17.3

NORTHWEST [140] 100 BCE–20 CE	NORTH: CENTER ~100 BCE	NORTH: CENTER//EAST 73 BCE // 73–28 BCE
Śaka invasions Moga/Maues (circa 80 BCE) BUDDHIST, etc. N.Iranian tribal leaders Bactrian/Local Prakrit Kharoṣṭhī	Śaka at Mathurā // small kingdoms: Kauśāmbī, Ayodhyā; NW tribal states BUDDHIST, etc. N. Iranian tribal leaders Prakrits (Sanskrit) Brāhmī	Śuṅga//Kāṇva in Magadha Bahasatimita . . . Devabhuti // Vāsudeva HINDU (written Veda?) Brahmins Sanskrit/Prakrits Brāhmī
SINDH, GUJARAT/NW. MAHARASTRA ~100 BCE?	DECCAN ~100 BCE	EAST: ORISSA ~100 BCE
Kṣatrapa Azes. . . Iranian/HINDU N. Iranian tribal leaders Sanskrit Brāhmī	Sātavāhana/Āndhra realm Simuka, . . . Sātakarṇi "Dakṣinapathapati" HINDU ? Old Western Prakrit Brāhmī	Mahāmegha-vāhana/Cedi Khāravela JAINA ? O. Western Prakrit Brāhmī
	SOUTH INDIA ~100 BCE	
	Early states: Pāṇḍya, etc; "Tamil Confederacy." LOCAL/JAINA Local gentry Early Tamil inscr. circa 150 BCE Tamil Brāhmī	

The picture is further complicated with the emergence of the separate Śaka kingdom of the Kṣatrapas in western India, centered on Gujarat, further, with that of the Mahāmeghavāhana kingdom in Orissa and the Sātavāhana (Āndhra) realm in the upper Deccan. Each of these polities followed different patterns, clearly visible in table 17.3.

Unlike their Śuṅga/Kāṇva adversaries in Magadha, the kings of Orissa were Jains (Khāravela), and they used an old *western* Prākṛt, not the chancellery Magadhan language of Aśoka. But they also were in competition with the Āndhras, the "lords of the Southern Road," who preferred brahmins and early Hinduism in their donations (though their subjects have left us many Buddhist inscriptions, especially in the

Western Ghats). However, the use of the same kind of early western Prākṛt in both kingdoms was due to the cultural predominance of the upper Deccan at the time.

The Kṣatrapas of Gujarat, too, were in conflict with the Āndhras, and they had to distinguish themselves in a different fashion: it was precisely in their area, where Iranian names and customs were gradually abandoned for Indian ones, and where we find the first official, long Sanskrit inscription, written in poetic Sanskrit under Rudradāman. While the movement toward Sanskrit certainly was "in the air" (note the *Buddhacarita*), the Āndhras stuck to their Prākṛt, even if they once tried to write in Sanskrit (see above, n. 39).

Each one of the four kingdoms, thus, "specialized" in different religious and cultural features, each one establishing an official image that each differed from that of their neighbors.

The south, the "Tamil confederacy" mentioned by Khāravela, was continuous with the upper Deccan realm of the Āndhras and the Oriyas; it too had its peculiarities, continued from the previous periods: local Brāhmī script, Tamil languages, and a mixture of local Tamil religion and Jainism. It may be that, by this time, the first Brahmins also had settled in the deep south. (They were atypical, to judge from the Sangam texts)

The Kushana Period

A similar situation, though under changing political domination, continued in the fourth period under review here. With the takeover of the northwest, and then of the Mathurā area, by the Central Asian Kushanas we observe, at first, some use of their adopted Bactrian language and east Iranian deities; but there was a quick adoption of Buddhism as well, as seen in the first coin that bears the name of the Buddha, significantly still in Greek characters used in the northwest and in Bactria. The Kushanas are well known for their patronage of Buddhism.

In stark contrast, the originally equally Central Asian Śakas of Gujarat embraced Hinduism, and Rudradāman not only adopted an Indian name but also wrote in Sanskrit. Again, in contrast to this approach, their Deccan neighbors, that is, initially the Āndhras and later the Ikṣvāku, also promoted Hinduism and brahmins, but differently from the Kṣatrapas, they continued with their established use of old Prakṛt, while their poet, Hāla, already used a much more modern form, Māhārāṣṭrī. The lower Deccan and the deep south continued on the path described above.

In short, for each of the four periods reviewed rather sketchily here, different official and political uses of script, language and religion emerge. These approaches and strategies are in need of a detailed study by specialists of the long period under review here. At any rate, these strategies set the pattern for much of what can be observed throughout the Indian "Middle Ages," when local kings rivaled their neighbors in similar fashion, including the import of brahmins from distant prestigious areas (Witzel 1986).

TABLE 17.4

NORTHWEST 20–46 CE //	NORTH: CENTER Early CE – 320 CE	NORTH: EAST
Pahlava Indo-Parthians // Kushana (Tukhāra) at Peshawar, etc. ZOROASTRIAN & local religions Iranian rulers Bactrian/ Prākṛt	Kushana / small kingdoms BUDDHIST, etc. Iranian and local rulers Prākṛts	small kingdoms HINDU Brahmins Prākṛts
GUJARAT / NW MAHARASTRA	DECCAN	ORISSA
Kṣatrapa Rudradāman 150 CE HINDU Sanskrit	Śātavāhana (250 CE > Ikṣvāku) Gautamīputra 150 CE, Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi HINDU O. Western Prākṛt	Cedi JAINA? local Prākṛt?
	SOUTH INDIA	
GUPTA era 320 CE–	Early states: Pāṇḍya, Cera, Cola: Karikāl 190 CE. --/-- LOCAL/JAINA Early Tamil / Sangam texts	

After this preliminary glimpse of royal politics and use of religion, language, and scripts, we may now turn to the specific reactions to the turmoil of the early period "between the empires" as seen in some early post-Mauryan Brahmanical texts.

BRAHMANICAL REACTIONS: LANGUAGE, TEXTS, RELIGION, SOCIAL CONDITIONS

As has been briefly discussed above, the various foreign influences and the continuous trade with the West and with Southeast Asia resulted in a remarkable opening and broadening of the Indian mind as well. During the Vedic period, contact with "outsiders"[53] was restricted and "foreigners" were looked down upon. People, or at

53 Even the inhabitants of the Panjab, once the center of Ṛgvedic civilization, were called *bāhika* "outsiders"(Witzel 1987, n. 90); found in *ŚB*, e.g. *ŚB*K 2.7.1.7; see also *ŚB*M 9.3.1.24 (see Witzel 1989: 227 and nn. 66–67). The term is still found in Kaiyaṭa's

least brahmins, were not supposed to travel to "non-Aryan" countries, including much of east and south India.[54] In contrast, the ethos of the time between the empires was characterized by much openness and by meeting the outside, so much so that a contemporary world-open form of post-Vedic religion developed, an early Hinduism that maintained relationships and interchange with the ideas and cultures of all neighbors of South Asia.

Even the purity-conscious brahmins now traveled to the forbidden territories south of the Vindhyas, to central and south India and also across the feared and shunned ocean,[55] to Egypt (Berenike) and to Southeast Asia, and settled in such distant places. These early adventurers now looked for livelihood in the not yet Hinduized south. They appeared at the courts of local south Indian chieftains and kings of the Sangam period. In Sangam texts they are described as quite unorthodox people, performing Atharva-like sorcery and even non-Vedic burial rituals involving cutting open of the chest of a deceased king. However, they were still only an insignificant factor in traditional Tamil religion which differed markedly, like contemporary Tamil culture as such, from that of north India.

The growing influence of brahmins in the Deccan, however, is clearly seen under the Śātavāhanas, who apparently were the first to give land donations, with written testimony, to the brahmins.[56] One Śātavāhana inscription of the first century CE reports that they gave away villages to brahmins, in order to ensure the execution of Vedic rituals. The system of donations and positions available at the courts no doubt helped in the spread of Brahmanism (and emerging Hinduism) south of the Vindhyas, even if this was attributed in medieval legend to the Ṛgvedic(!) Ṛṣi Agastya.[57]

commentary on Patañjali: *gāṃ bāhīkam ānaya* "bring here the 'bovine' (blockhead), the Bāhīka!"; see Wezler 1969: 248sqq.

54 Despite the warnings of the late Vedic texts. *BDhS* 1.2.13sq. denounces these tribes: *avantayo 'ṅga-magadhāḥ surāṣṭrā dakṣiṇāpathāḥ / upāvṛt-sindhu-sauvīrā ete saṃkīrṇayonayaḥ*, and prescribes an expiation rite after having gone to: *āraṭṭān kāraskarān puṇḍrān sauvīrān vaṅgān kaliṅgān prānūnān iti*; the older text, *BŚS* 18.13:357.6, adds some Panjab tribes: *ya āraṭṭān vā gāndhārān vā sauvīrān vā karaskarān vā kaliṅgān vā gacchati, sa yadi sarvaśa eva pāpakṛn manyeta*; in short, one is not allowed to go "abroad" to the western and (south)eastern neighbors of the Vedic territories, to Panjab, Sindh, and Saurāṣṭra, to Magadha, Aṅga, Kaliṅga, etc.; see Witzel 1987a and Brucker 1980. On return from these countries, a serious *prāyaścitta* was necessary, just as it still was for travel to England in the twentieth century, or as it is, even today, to America for very orthodox brahmins; Jaina monks still do not cross the ocean at all.

55 Manu 3.158 prescribes avoiding contact with a *samudrayāyī*.

56 There is a spurious(?) passage in *BĀU* 4.4.23 where Janaka gives all of Videha to Yājñavalkya and at *ChU* 4.2.4–5 some villages are given to the sage Raikva.

57 Interestingly, a sage with a non-Sanskritic name (Kuiper 1991). One must wonder whether the forest idylls of the *MBh* (such as that of Śakuntalā and her stepfather Kāṇva) are, in reality, a copy of the Jaina practice of establishing ascetic's dwellings (or caves) in the south. Did brahmins indeed feel the need to wander down south as there was ample jungle left in north India, where they could have lived comfortably and undisturbed,

The brahmins had been preceded by the Jainas. According to Jaina tradition, some of them, led by Bhadrabāhu, emigrated south into Karnataka, along with the retired Maurya king Candragupta who had become a Jaina and traveled south with Bhadrabāhu (around 300 BCE.). Early Jaina influence in the south (second century BCE) is indeed obvious in many early Tamil inscriptions (Mahadevan 2003).

In short, in post-Maurya times, reactions to all of the preceding developments (Persians, Greeks, Śaka, Buddhism and Jainism, foreign trade) are clearly visible. The brahmins, however, were engaged not just in (sometimes imperceptible) assimilation to contemporary practices. Some of them, interestingly those whose texts have actually been preserved by later Hindu tradition, also engaged in opposing the assimilatory trends. Even where it is not particularly explicit what practices they argued against,[58] what they excused in apologetic fashion,[59] or about what they preferred to keep silent, it is clear that they were not content with their contemporaries and that they took to the offensive where possible.

It is therefore useful to take a closer look at one of the very few Sanskrit texts that have come down to us from the early post-Maurya period, the "large discussion" (*Mahābābhāṣya*[60] by Patañjali of Pāṇini's grammar *(Aṣṭādhyāyī)*,[61] which can be dated at circa 150 BCE.

Patañjali: Language, Ritual, Society

As briefly indicated above, the Śuṅga king Puṣyamitra pursued politics of restoration and Vedic revivalism; this approach was endorsed by his contemporary, the brahmin Patañjali. He probably stemmed from the Mathurā area[62] (Thieme, oral comm. 1966;

close to a population that might have given them alms and sustenance, even if, as per Thapar (2002: 348), the Śakas, Indo-Greeks, Kushanas, and even the Hūṇas tended to patronize Buddhism and Jainism (it might be added: as well as the emerging forms of Hinduism with recent puranic developments). She thinks that this reinforced the trend, seen since Sangam times, of brahmins to seek employment in the south; see above on land grants under Śātavāhanas and Guptas.

58 For example, injunctions against writing down the sacred Vedic texts are only mentioned in some *smṛtis* and in a late section of *MBh* (13.24.70) where the sellers, corrupters, and copyists of the Vedas are threatened with hell; such injunctions are totally skipped over, for example, by Patañjali (see below). However, some indications in late Vedic compilations (*VS* Kāṇva, see Witzel 1989) hint at a time of writing down such texts under the Kāṇva Dynasty (circa 50 BCE), that is at the same time when according to tradition the Buddhist canon was first written down in Sri Lanka (more details in Witzel et al., forthcoming).

59 Such as non-Vedic practices such as cross-cousin marriage (see Trautmann 1995)?

60 Consisting of 1,413 Nāgarī pages, in Kielhorn's edition.

61 Of some 35 small *poṭhī* folios.

62 Note Patañjali 1.2.2.1: 191.2–192.12: *tad yathā mathurāyām iva mathurāvat. pāṭaliputre iva pāṭaliputravat.* (Kielhorn, Mahābhāṣya ed., repr., appendix, has an unlikely astronomical calculation for Patañjali's home, pointing to the extreme northwest, Kashmir/Taxila).

Scharfe 1976). He speaks about Puṣyamitra in the present tense, as if he was his own king.

Patañjali intentionally uses grammatical examples taken from the politics of the time in order to comment on or criticize contemporary affairs—exactly as even today our own contemporary grammarians do. Typical and famous examples are: "the Greek (*Yavana*) has [just now] besieged Sāketa" (Ayodhyā), and "the Greek has [just now] besieged Mādhyamikā" (near Ujjain);[63] or he reports, probably with satisfaction, that "here we sacrifice for Puṣyamitra."[64] He also mentions the royal council of this, the most important Śuṅga king as well as that of one of his Maurya predecessors.[65]

Patañjali is aware of the contemporary neighboring peoples in the northwest: the Yavana (Greeks),[66] Bāhlīka (Bactrians),[67] Śaka (north Iranians, coming in via Bactria),[68] Bāhīka (Panjabis), and he also mentions the eastern country of the Kaliṅga (Orissa).[69]

Interestingly, Patañjali (2.4.10: I.475.2–10) says that the Śaka and Yavana live outside Āryāvārta,[70] which he defines as the area between the Himalayas and the Vindhya, with Ādarśa as its western border and the Kālaka forest as its eastern one. It is important to note that he—just as Manu 2.21sqq.—felt it necessary to define the

63 Pat. 3.2.111: 119:4–5: *aruṇad Yavanaḥ Sāketam. aruṇad Yavano Madhyamikām*, which agrees with Greek records about the conquests of Demetrios and Menandros at that time.

64 Pat. 3.1.26: 34:1,2,6: *Puṣyamitro yajate, yājakā yājayantīti. tatra bhavitavyaṃ Puṣyamitro yājayate yājakā yajayantīti*. 3.2.123: 123:3: *ihādhīmahe. iha vasāmaḥ. iha Puṣyamitraṃ yājayāmaḥ*.

65 Pat. 1.1.68.3: 176.25–177.16; cf. 1.1.68: 277:10–11: *sabhā rājāmanuṣyapūrvā ... rājasabhā ... Puṣyamitrasabhā Candraguptasabhā*.

66 Note also the mentioning of Greek script in Kātyāyana's Varttika and in Pat. 4.1.49: 220.19 *yavanāl-lipyām* |3| *yavanāl-lipyām iti vaktavyam. yavanānī lipiḥ*. But the word *lipi* for "script" does not appear otherwise, nor does Kharoṣṭhī or Brāhmī. Cf. also 2.4.10 *śaka-yavanam*, n. 68.

67 Detailed discussion in Witzel 1980.

68 See Cardona 1976: 266; See 2.4.10: I.475.2–10: ... *āryāvartāt aniravasitānām ... śakayavanam śauryakrauñcam iti na sidhyati*; see also *Śāka-pārthiva* 2.1.69: 406.6, 2.1.34–35: I.386.18–388.4, where however, *śāka* "vegetable" is intended: *śākabhojī pārthivaḥ śākapārthivaḥ* (see Cardona 1976: 267); the same applies at other locations in Pat. 1.2.52: 227:14, 4.4.24: 330.17–331.2: *alavaṇaḥ sūpaḥ, alavaṇaḥ śākam iti sūpaḥ*; etc. Such data can be compared with other sources, if scholars would only evaluate the cultural data of this large grammatical commentary with more attention and in more detail, as was seminally carried out by A. Weber, more than a hundred years ago, in his *Indische Studien*, vol. 13.

69 However, the newly immigrant Tukhāra (Yue Zhi) and Pahlava on the northwestern borders and beyond them, the Hūṇa and Cīna, are not yet mentioned; even the Śuṅga are absent; for Ābhīra, see Sircar 1965: 182.

70 Pat. 2.4.10: 475.2–10: *kaḥ punaḥ Āryāvartaḥ? prāg Ādarśāt pratyak Kālakavanāt dakṣiṇena Himavantam uttareṇa Pāriyātram. yady evaṃ Kiṣkindha-Gandikam Śaka-Yavanam* (see above n. 66) *Śaurya-Krauñcam iti na sidhyati*.

"Land of the Ārya"[71] (and that of the well-educated, *śiṣṭa*) and demarcate it vis-à-vis the Greeks, Śakas, the Panjab people, and other outsiders. Āryāvārta was a new concept, apparently due to the need felt to indicate who were the true "Hindus" of the time. This theme is repeated in various forms throughout the *Mahābhāṣya*. For example, Patañjali clearly avoids the Greek words (and other *apabhraṃśa* "barbarisms") that had begun to permeate Sanskrit at the time.[72]

Apart from the observations made so far, Patañjali states his attitude very clearly in the introduction to his *Mahābhāṣya*. This amounts to a rescue attempt for proper Sanskrit vis-à-vis the epic and other hybrid forms of Sanskrit used by bards and writers of inscriptions alike.[73] Sanskrit was still used, even centuries after the constant employment of Prākṛt by Buddhism, Jainism, and the Maurya administration, as the status language of the brahmins, but not without faults, as the few early inscriptions

71 Interestingly, Manu has almost the same definition at 2.21–22; this is another indication that helps to limit the time frame of the compiler of the *Manusmṛti* to the second or first century CE, see also below, n. 92–93. See also *BDhS* 1.1.2.9 with virtually the same definition: *prāg ādarśāt pratyak kanakhalād dakṣiṇena himavantam udak pāriyātram etad āryāvartam*. *BDhS* adds: *gaṅgā-yamunayor antaram ity eke*; and, again similar to Manu, according to a Gāthā of the Sāma Veda school of the Bhāllavins: *paścāt sindhur vidharaṇī sūryasyodayanaṃ puraḥ / yāvat kṛṣṇā vidhāvanti tāvad dhi brahmavarcasam*.

72 The following Greek words are still missing: *suruṅga* "tunnel," *khalīna* "bit" (*khalinī* 4.2.51: 282.4 is derived from khala); *paristoma* "blanket," *marakata* "emerald," *sōtēr* with loan translation to *trātṛ*; further, though purely negative evidence (ex silentio!): there are no Hellenistic astronomical words (*horā*, *kendra*, etc.) yet, and no Greek words for writing, book, ink, pen (*kalama*), *drachme*, etc. and no later Iranian names/designations such as Mihira, Kṣatrapa, etc.—Interestingly, older Persian loans such as *pīlu* "elephant" (see above n. 12), *bandī* "female slave" (Manu) are missing, too. However, *lipi* "script" appears once as it is quoted already by Pāṇini. Similarly, *grantha* "book, written work," which also found in Pāṇini (and *Nirukta* 1.9, 20; otherwise, it means "honeycomb"), is discussed several times by Pat.: 4.3.101: 315.8, 12: *granthe ca darśanāt* |2| *yatra ca dṛśyate granthaḥ, sa tatra kṛte granthe* (4.1.116) *ity eva siddham; granthānta*: 6.3.79: III.170.16: *granthāntādhike ca* [6.3.87] ... *granthānte ... yas tarhi kālottarapado granthas tadartham idaṃ vaktavyam. sakāṣṭham jyotiṣam adhīte.—granthika*: 1.26.6: II.34.14–36.21 *ākhyānāt ... granthikeṣu kathaṃ yatra śabdagaḍumātraṃ lakṣyate*; 1.4.29: I. 329.6 *naṭasya śṛṇoti. granthikasya śṛṇoti*. See also Manu 12.102sq.: *vedaśāstrārthatattvajño yatra tatrāśrame vasan / iha-eva loke tiṣṭhan sa brahmabhūyāya kalpate // ajñebhyo granthinaḥ śreṣṭhā granthibhyo dhāriṇo varāḥ / dhāribhyo jñāninaḥ śreṣṭhā jñānibhyo vyavasāyinaḥ*; for other forms of writing in Manu, see below, n. 104.

73 See Damsteegt 1978, now Oberlies 2004; note Middle Indo-Aryan forms in some late Vedic texts such as *KaṭhUp* [bhoti] for *bhavati*, see Alsdorf 1950, Hinüber 1986: 22 sqq. All of the above indicates, again, the contemporaneousness of Patañjali and the bulk of the epic with its typical Prākṛt-influenced forms and syntax (Oberlies 2004). In the end, Pat.'s rescue mission for Sanskrit was successful: see the Sanskrit of Aśvaghoṣa, Rudradāman, etc.; see Salomon 1998: 86sqq.

made by brahmins themselves indicate.[74] Consequently, Patañjali deplores the barbarisms of his time, for example, the "wrong" words for "cow" *(gāvī, goṇī, gotā, gopotalikā)*,[75] which he includes among the "many debased" (*apabhraṃśa*) forms of the "few" correct words. Based on the evidence of the inscriptions, this describes the linguistic situation perfectly. Or, he complains about the wrong pronunciation of the three *s*-sounds of Sanskrit[76] that had collapsed nearly everywhere in north India into one phoneme—a factor that, incidentally, again points to Mathurā, where it is seen in inscriptions of brahmins. His advice therefore is not to talk like the barbarians (*mleccha*).[77] The Sanskrit of his time is exemplified by the first known Sanskrit inscription, the Ayodhya stone inscription (Sircar 1965: 94 no. 9),[78] which is a little

74 From the beginning of our era. Śo(m)ḍāsa (circa 1–25 CE, Sircar 1965: 114sqq.; Lüders 1961), the Mathurā stone inscription (Sircar no. 26), or the Kushana time Isapur Yūpa inscription. (Sircar 1965: 149 no. 47A). See further, Salomon 1998: 86sqq.

75 Pat. I: 10.4–11.14: *bhūyāṃso 'paśabdā alpīyāṃsaḥ śabdāḥ. ekaikasya śabdasya bahavo 'pabhraṃśāḥ. tat yathā gaur iti asya śabdasya gāvī goṇī gotā gopotalikā. ity evamādayo 'pabhraṃśāḥ*; the reason for avoidance is that one who knows grammar does not obtain *adharma*. See Pat. I.2.18–3.5.

76 Pat. I: 13.1–14.22: *śaśaḥ ṣaṣa iti mā bhūt. palāśaḥ palāṣaḥ iti mā bhūt. mañcakaḥ mañjakaḥ iti mā bhūt*. However, note that Patañjali's own name has the wrong pronunciation: it should be Patañcali, as is indeed found in late Vedic, at *BĀU* 3, where Patañcala is the name of a person in Madra (north Panjab). Note also the evidence on *ñc/ñj-* in the Mathurā inscriptions, see Damsteegt 1978.

77 Pat. I: 2.3–9: *mlecchā mā bhūma. iti adhyeyaṃ vyākaraṇam*. Did he have the foreigners, i.e., the Śaka and Greeks, in mind? However, see above, and the following note on the mixed record of early Mathurā Sanskrit. Patañjali's Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa paraphrase has: *te asurā helayo helaya iti kurvantaḥ parā babhūvuḥ. tasmāt brāhmaṇena na mlecchitavai na apābhāṣitavai. mleccho ha vā eṣa yad apaśabdaḥ. mlecchā mā bhūma. iti adhyeyam vyākaraṇam* . . . Note the old-fashioned infinitive in *-tavai* (Witzel 1989; Damsteegt 1978, van Daalen 1980). However, the original text (*ŚB* 3.2.23) quoted by Patañjali has: *tāṃ devāḥ | asurebhyo 'ntarāyaṃs. tāṃ svīkṛtyāgnāv eva parigṛhya, sarvahutam ajuhavur. āhutir hi devānāṃ. sa yām evāmūm anuṣṭubhājuhavus, tad evaināṃ tad devāḥ svyakurvata. te 'surā āttavacaso: he 'lavo he 'lava iti vadantaḥ parābabhūvuḥ | tatraitām api vācam ūcuḥ | upajijñāsyāṃ. sa mlechas. tasmān na brāhmaṇo mleched, asuryā haiṣā vā. natevaiṣa dviṣatāṃ sapatnānām ādatte. vācaṃ te 'syāt. tavacasaḥ parābhavanti, ya evam etad veda*. See, however, *ŚB*K 4.2.1.17–18.

78 See above, n. 38. (1) Mathurā inscr. No. 82, with the correct gen. *-sya* but with other mistakes (from the beginning of our era):

[Line 1] *svāmisya mahākṣatrapasya Śoṃḍāsasya gaṃjavareṇa brāhmaṇena Śegrava-sagotreṇa* [2] *raṇi imāṣāṃ yamaḍa-puṣkaraṇīnāṃ paścimā puṣkaraṇi udpāno* [3] *[śilā]paṭṭo ca* "by the treasurer of Svāmin Mahākṣatrapa Śoṃḍāsa, a Brahman of the Śevagra (Śaivagra) gotra, a tank, the western tank of these twin tanks, a reservoir, a grove, a pillar, and this(?) stone-slab (were caused to be made)" (Lüders).

(2) Īsapur (east of Mathurā, on the other side of the Yamunā), Yūpa inscription from Kushana times; Lüders 1961: 125 no. 149a: [Line 1] *siddham* ‖ *mahārājasya rājātirajasya devapu-*[2] *trasya śāher=vVāsiṣkasya rājyasaṃvatsare [ca]* [3] *turvi[ṃ]śe* 20 4 *gṛṣmāmāse caturt[th]e 4 diva[s]e* [4] *tri[ṃ]śe* 30 30 *asyāṃ pūrvvāyāṃ Rudrila-puttreṇa Droṇa-*[5] *lena brāhm[a]ṇena Bhāradvāja-sagottreṇa Mā-*[6] *ṇa-cchandogena iṣ[ṭv]ā sattre[ṇ]a dvā[d]aśar[ā]ttreṇa* [7] *yūpaḥ pratiṣṭhā[p]itaḥ prīyant[ā]m=agnaya(ḥ)*

later than Patañjali. It has been written in basically correct Sanskrit and reports that Dhana[deva], the overlord of Kosala, and probably the sixth in line from Puṣyamitra, had set up a memorial for his father.

1] kosalādhipena dvir-aśvamedha-yājinaḥ[79] *senāpateḥ puṣyamitrasya ṣaṣṭhena kauśikoputreṇa dhana[. . .]*

2] dharmarājñā pituḥ phalgudevasya ketanaṃ kāritaṃ

More about Patañjali's stance can be learned from his comments on women, alcohol, and outsiders. One should not speak women-like,[80] a topic that is first recognized (but not criticized) in the Ṛgveda, where the goddesses use, like the women in the much later, classical drama, a more popular form of Vedic than the gods (and poets).[81] Further, he admonishes his contemporaries not to drink alcohol,[82] and of course, not to kill a brahmin.[83]

Coming even closer to traditional concepts, he says that grammar is taught to protect the Vedas,[84] and he gives some indications that traditional solemn rituals (*yajña*) are in decline. Curiously, he complains that 100- and 1,000-year rituals are no longer carried out.[85]

In short, Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* represents a catechism of traditionalism: protection of the Vedas, proper pronunciation and adherence to correct grammar, avoidance of "popular" words, behaving properly, not killing brahmins, not drinking

"Success! in the twenty-fourth - 24th- year of the reign of mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra ṣāhi Vāsiṣka, in the fourth -4th- month of summer, on the thirtieth - 30th- day, on this date, Doṇala, the son of Rudrila, a Brāhmaṇa of the Bhāradvāja gotra (and) a Māṇacchandoga (Māṇa? of the Sāmaveda], having performed a sacrifice lasting twelve days, has set up the sacrificial post. May the (three) Fires be pleased!" (Lüders).

79 For the horse sacrifice of Puṣyamitra, see *Mahābhāṣya* (n. 64, above) and Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* (though composed half a millennium later).

80 Pat. 4.5: 3.6–9: *abhivāde strīvat mā bhūma iti adhyeyam vyākaraṇam*. Note the distinction between men's and women's language ever since the Ṛgveda, see Witzel 1989: 101 nn. 8, 9; see also Pāṇ. 8.2.82–83 . . . *pratyabhivādeśūdre*, Pat. III: 416.7–417.5. Brahmanic misogyny is a hackneyed topic in Vedic and later Indian literature, ever since the *ṚV*: the three evils of "sleep, women, alcohol" are often mentioned (e.g., at Manu 7.50).

81 For example, *kuru* for *kṛṇu*, see Hoffmann 1975–76: 581.

82 Note, however, the frequent references in the Mathurā inscriptions to taverns and alcohol, Lüders 1961; see also Pat. I: 4.4: *yaḥ tu prayuṅkte: yad udumbaravarṇānāṃ ghaṭīnām maṇḍalam mahat | pītaṃ na gamayet svargaṃ kiṃ tat kratugataṃ nayed iti. pramattagīta eṣa tatra bhavataḥ* (see *MBh* 8.30 on Panjab inhabitants, see below n. 108).

83 Pat. I: 2.18–3.5: *yo hy ajānan vai brāhmaṇam hanyāt surām vā pibet so 'pi manye patitaḥ syāt*. See Manu's denunciation of drinking, 3.159, 7.50, 9.13, 12.45, 56; but contrast 5.56.

84 Pat. I: 1.14–2.2: *rakṣārthaṃ vedānām adhyeyaṃ vyākaraṇam. lopāgama-varṇavikārajño hi samyag vedān paripālayiṣyati. . . . āgamaḥ khalv api. brāhmaṇena niṣkāraṇo dharmaḥ ṣaḍaṅgo vedo 'dhyeyo jñeyaḥ iti. Pradhānaṃ ca ṣaṭsu aṅgeṣu vyākaraṇam.*

85 Pat. I: 8.23–10.6: *dīrghasattrāṇi vārṣaśatikāni vārṣasahasrikāṇi ca. na cādyatve kaś cid api vyavaharati.*

alcohol, which everybody around him was doing, as the Mathurā inscriptions—and Patañjali himself—indicate.[86] One may ask why he felt it necessary to list all these items in his long introduction to his commentary on Pāṇini's grammar.

Other Early Sanskrit Texts

Unfortunately, the other literary texts of Patañjali's time still are of religious character, such as the incipient Buddhist literature in Sanskrit, or a Pāli text of post-Mauryan times, the *Questions of Menander* (*Milindapañha*). It discusses the religious questions prominent in the Panjab of the period around 150 BCE. However, there are several texts, such as the epics and the normative "law book" of Manu that normally are not used extensively for description of the early post-Mauryan period, as the exact time of their composition had remained uncertain.

More by good luck than by design and by prominence, a few other texts have come down from the period between the empires. There are, to be sure, such texts of the Śuṅga/Kāṇva and the early Kushana periods, including the older parts of *Arthaśāstra* (which has additions up to the first century CE), early medicine (Caraka, Suśruta), some early astronomical texts (*Yavanajātaka* of Sphujidhvaja, ed. Pingree 1978, *Paulīṣa*, *Romaka*, etc.), the *Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśāstra* (in part, first century CE), and some early Sanskrit poetry such as Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarānanda*, Bhāsa's dramas, etc. However, they cannot be treated here in any detail as this would lead to far. Instead, Manu and the epics will be consulted briefly, for materials indicating contemporaneous points of view.[87]

Manu

As has been briefly indicated above, early examples of the Brahmanical reaction against the openness of the period "between the empires," with clearly expressed restorative tendencies in customs and religion, can also be detected in Manu's *smṛti*, in certain sections of the *Mahābhārata*, or in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*. They all counter the foreign influences of the Greeks and others, and strive at restoring proper "Vedic" customs, including the classification of classes and castes, particularly that of the "mixed castes."[88] In that sense, the *Manusmṛti* maybe regarded as the first *dharmanibandha*, perhaps collected even under Puṣyamitra. This is a type of *dharma* digest that was to become very prominent about a millennium later, when most of them were composed under new, important dynasties.[89] It is certainly very difficult to date, with any accuracy, texts such as Manu, the *MBh*, and the *Arthaśāstra*. However,

[86] See the verse in the introduction (above, n. 82) about a circle of alcohol vessels, that "do not lead to heaven": Pat. I: 3.3–4: *yad udumbaravarīṇānāṃ ghaṭīnām maṇḍalam mahat pītaṃ na gamayet svargaṃ*.

[87] Incidentally, this is something that is not usually carried out nowadays, as each genre, by now, is regarded and treated as a separate unit or topic of research.

[88] See Brinkhaus 1978.

[89] The apparently last ones were composed under the Dogra kings of Kashmir in the 1860s and for the Rāṇā regime of Nepal in the 1850s (Mulukī Ain, in Nepali). Incidentally, a sociopolitically inspired movement now aims at "rewriting Manu" or even to "write new *smṛtis*," to fit contemporary Hinduism.

recent deliberations[90] indicate, at least for the *MBh*, that we may have to think of the early post-Mauryan period. The rules given in both Manu and the *MBh* about the same topics as discussed by Patañjali (see above) fit very well into this time frame, as do their rules about mixed castes and "half-Hindus" on the frontiers of South Asia. They all are attempts to reconstitute society according to conservative Brahmanical norms.

There are many details in Manu, Patañjali, and the *MBh* that seem to come from a common source that is contemporaneous to all these texts.[91] Manu's definition of Āryāvarta[92] is close to that of Patañjali. Manu also echoes some of Patañjali's words as far as the *mlecchas* are concerned,[93] and he refers to the Puruṣa Sūkta (*ṚV* 10.90) for the origin of the four classes (*varṇa*).[94] According to Manu, border people[95] are either barbarian-speaking (*mleccha*) or *ārya*-speaking foreigners/enemies (*dasyu*): the Puṇḍraka in the east, the Coḍa and Draviḍa in the south, the northwestern peoples of the Kāmboja, Yavana, Śaka, Pārada (Persians), Pahlava (Parthians), and Cīna (Chinese), as well as the Himalayan tribes of the Kirāta (Nepal), Darada (Dards), and Khaśa (S. Kashmir). Like Patañjali, he also has detailed rules about drinking alcohol, mixed marriages,[96] etc. While these data seem to point to the brahmins' wish for a restoration of "Vedic" norms in a time of unrest and social change, the *Bhagavadgītā* provides the "spiritual" underpinnings for the kṣatriyas (and, subsequently, many others).

Mahābhārata and *Rāmāyaṇa*

The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are usually attributed to the period "between the empires,"[97] while the ultimate sources of the *Mahābhārata* go back to the Bronze

[90] By some participants of the 3rd Dubrovnik conference on the Epics and Purāṇas (DICSEP), August 2001, notably A. Hiltebeitel 2004; Fitzgerald 2001 and chapter 11 in this volume; see the introduction by P. Olivelle to his edition of Manu (2005).

[91] Or vice versa, or again, based on data from a common contemporary source.

[92] Manu 2.21–22: *himavad-vindhyayor madhyaṃ yat prāg vinaśanād api | pratyag eva prayāgāc ca madhyadeśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ || ā samudrāt tu vai pūrvād ā samudrāc ca paścimāt | tayor evāntaraṃ giryor āryāvartaṃ vidur budhāḥ*; for Patañjali's definition, see above, n. 70; see *MBh* 8.30 (below, n. 107) about the northwestern areas (Panjab, etc.) that are excluded from the virtuous inhabitants of the Kurukṣetra, Kuru, etc., territories; see Manu 10.43sqq.

[93] Manu 10.45sqq.: *mukha-bāhu-ūru-pad-jānāṃ yā loke jātayo bahiḥ | mlecchavācaś cāryavācaḥ sarve the dasyavaḥ smṛtāḥ*. "All those tribes in this world, which are excluded from (the community of) those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet (of Brahman), are called Dasyus, whether they speak the language of the *mlecchas* (barbarians) or that of the Aryans" (Bühler).

[94] Manu 10.4sqq. 10.45.

[95] Manu 10.43sqq.: *vṛṣalatvaṃ gatā loke . . . | puṇḍrakāś coḍa-draviḍāḥ kāmbojā yavanāḥ śakāḥ | pāradāḥ pahlavāś cīnāḥ kirātā daradāḥ khaśāḥ*. See, again, the similarity of the list in *MBh* 7.95.13: *śakāḥ kirātā daradā barbarāś tāmraliptakāḥ* 7.97.13: *śakāḥ kāmboja-bāhlīkā yavanāḥ pāradās tathā*.

[96] See Brinkhaus 1978.

[97] Or, frequently, to (various parts of) the whole millennium between 500 BCE and 500 CE; see now Brockington 1998: 26, 78sq., 130sqq.

Age.[98] However, these (lost) early sources were enlarged and changed by bards for many centuries after (some of the actual) events. The bulk of the *MBh*—notably excluding the late *dharma* sections (*MBh* 12,13)—can now be dated around circa 100 BCE, as several scholars, such as A. Hiltebeitel and G. Fitzgerald seem to have agreed at the recent third Dubrovnik conference on the epic (2002). This text frequently mentions the Greeks (*Yavana*, 326 BCE–), Parthians (*Pahlava*, i.e., the Arsacide Parthians of Iran, 247 BCE), the Chinese (*Cīna* = Ch'in/Qin 221 BCE),[99] the Śaka (circa 140 BCE), and their warlike neighbors, the Huns[100] (*Hūṇa, Harahūṇa;* circa 200/175 BCE), the Tukhāra (Yue Ji/Kushana, circa 80 CE), and once even the "Greek towns" Romā and Antakhī (*Antiochia*).[101] The bulk of the text, as we have it now, thus can hardly be earlier than circa 100 BCE. The distant Huns and Chinese[102] are mentioned as border people, known only by hearsay,[103] along with other peoples of the northwest with which area they had trade relations via Central Asia. Further, a date post quem is provided by the domination by the Qin/Ch'in state over the remainder of China, in the year 221 BCE, and by the fights of the Huns with the Chinese in Central Asia, under the powerful Hun ruler Mao Dun (209–174 BCE), as well as a date (ante quem?), by the Roman conquest of the Seleucid Antiochia in 64 BCE.

This can now be supported by other evidence, such as the Persian and Greek loan words in the text noted above. The takeover of such words seems limited to Greek influence of the military kind and this stops before the beginning of the Common Era.[104]

[98] See Witzel 1995: 339sq. for the development of the epic themes of a great battle between the Pūru and Bharata to that of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍava, from the *ṚV* to the *MBh*; see now Witzel (2005b). The *Rāmāyaṇa* is a later composition that follows closely the Proppian schema of the 30-odd items of a hero tale, as demonstrated by M. Ježić at the 3rd DICSEP conference at Dubrovnik, 2001 (publ. in the conference series forthcoming).

[99] Ch'in (Qin) overcame the rest of the Warring Chinese States in 221 BCE, and the first emperor died in 210 BCE.

[100] For the Chionite, the "black-red" Huns, see Bailey 1954; the great Hun chief Mao Dun who threatened China lived from 209–174 BCE; see below n. 103.

[101] This refers to the very large town (10 by 5 miles) of Antiokheia Epidaphnes; it was the capital of Syria, the last remnant of the Seleucid Empire that was conquered by Rome in 64 BCE. The West Asian kingdom of Pergamon was conquered by Rome in 190/129 BCE and Macedonia in 148 BCE. Obviously the authors of the *MBh* were informed about some aspects of this situation.

[102] And their silk, *cīnapaṭṭa*, different from the local Indian *kauṣeya* silk; see now Good 2003.

[103] Note that the presence of the Huns and Chinese in the *MBh* indicates the wide circuits of trade and exchanges at the time. Direct contact between the new Chinese empire and Ferghana, Bactria, etc., was established only by Chang Ch'ien (circa 172–114 BCE).

[104] Greek astronomy (with words such as *horā*, *kendra*, etc., see n. 19) is not yet present; equally, Hellenistic words for writing, book, coins are absent; even the old loan from Iranian, *mudrā*, is not seen, as well as the later loans such as Mihira, Kṣatrapa, etc. The *Rām*, as an eastern text focusing on Ayodhyā and Pañcāla/Kosala, has only words such as *paristoma*, *pīlu*, *trātṛ* (but not: *suruṅga*, *khalīna*, *marakata*, *pustaka*, *lipi*, *mihira*,

The actions described in the *Mahābhārata* are concentrated in Kurukṣetra and its wider surroundings, while the *Rāmāyaṇa* is situated more toward the east, in Kosala and its (southern) surroundings.[105] Many of the numerous detailed descriptions in the *MBh* can then be used[106] for the exploration of contemporary ethnography. Especially the treatment of the northwest is very interesting. The "bald" (clean-shaven) Greeks of the Bactrian and the Panjab Greek kingdoms are frequently combined with other barbarians (*mleccha*). On the other hand, they are somewhat surprisingly called "all-knowing."[107] But, they do not have a "proper" social order with four classes but only two, free men and slaves. They drink alcohol, eat, dress, and marry in improper ways. They inhabit an area that one should not go to, which echoes Bodhāyana's and Manu's concerns (see above).[108] However, all of the Panjab was seen, already in the later Veda (*ŚB* 9.3.1.24), as an area of ruffians and barbarians[109] whom one should avoid.[110]

kṣatrapa, etc.). Also, note the evidence/overlap in Manu 8.168 *sa-mudre* about documents written by force: *balād dattaṃ balād bhuktaṃ balād yac cāpi lekhitam* I *sarvān balakṛtān arthān akṛtān manur abravīt*; on books: 12.103 *ajñebhyo granthinaḥ śreṣṭhā granthibhyo dhāriṇo varāḥ* I *dhāribhyo jñāninaḥ śreṣṭhā jñānibhyo vyavasāyinaḥ* II "(Even forgetful) students of the (sacred) books are more distinguished than the ignorant, those who remember them surpass the (forgetful) students, those who possess a knowledge (of the meaning) are more distinguished than those who (only) remember (the words), men who follow (the teaching of the texts) surpass those who (merely) know (their meaning)." (Bühler).

[105] Brockington 1998: 398sqq. 379.

[106] Necessarily with caution, because of the vague and uncertain time of their composition, beyond the fundamental divisions of the text such as the late books 12/13 of the *Mahābhārata* and 1 and 7 of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

[107] *MBh* 8.30.80: *sarvajñā yavanā, rājan, śūrāś caiva viśeṣataḥ*.

[108] *MBh* 12.65.13: *yavanāḥ kirātā gāndhārāś cīnāḥ śabara-barbarāḥ* I *śakās tuṣārāḥ kahvāś ca pahlavāś ca-āndhra-madrakāḥ*; *MBh* 13.33.191 sqq. . . . *śakā yavana-kāmbojās tāstāḥ kṣatriyajātayaḥ* I *vṛṣalatvam parigatā brāhmaṇānām adarśanāt*; note, especially, the long passages in *MBh* 8.30.9–47 dealing with the *adharma* customs and behavior of the people of the land of the "Five Rivers" and the lower Indus, among whom one should not stay: *MBh* 8.30.9: *bāhlīkadeśam madrāṃś ca kutsayan vākyam abravīt*; 11: *pancānāṃ sindhu ṣaṣṭhānāṃ nadīnāṃ ye 'ntar āśritāḥ* I *tān dharmabāhyān aśucīn bāhlīkān parivarjayet*; 14: *jartikā nāma bāhlīkās teṣāṃ vṛttaṃ suninditam*; 15: *gomāṃsaṃ laśunaiḥ saha* I *apūpamāṃsa-*; 16–17: *hasanti gānti nṛtyanti strībhir mattā vivāsasaḥ... mattāvagītair vividhaiḥ kharoṣṭraninadopamaiḥ*; 36: *āraṭṭā nāma te deśā naṣṭadharmān na tān vrajet*; 38 sq.: *kāṣṭhakuṇḍeṣu bāhlīkā mṛṇmayeṣu ca bhuñjate saktuvāṭyāvalipteṣu śvādilīḍheṣu nirghṛṇāḥ* II *āvikaṃ cauṣṭrikaṃ caiva kṣīraṃ gārdabham eva ca* I *tad vikārāṃś ca bāhlīkāḥ khādanti ca pibanti ca*; 43: *pañcanadyo vahanty etā yatra nihsṛtya parvatāt* I *āraṭṭā nāma bāhlīkā na teṣv āryo dvyahaṃ vaset*; 45: *kāraskarān mahiṣakān kalingān kīkaṭāṭavīn* [see *ṚV* Kīkaṭa]; 47: *āraṭṭā nāma te deśā bāhlīkā nāma te janāḥ* I *vasāti-sindhu-sauvīrā iti prāyo vikutsitāḥ*. The customs of the Bāhlīka look like those of recent immigrants from Bactria (see Witzel 1980).

[109] *ŚB* 9.3.1.24: *ya etāsāṃ nadīnām pibanti, ripratarāḥ śapanatarā āhanasyāvāditarā bhavanti* (Witzel 1989: 227; see Witzel, 2005b, n. 150; see above n. 53); for *MBh*., see above n. 107 (*MBh* 8.30).

They were supposed to have descended[111] from the Ṛgvedic Druhyu tribe; in the *MBh* a eponymous Druhyu was imagined as its ancestor, as is the case with other old Ṛgvedic tribes (Kuru, Pūru, etc.). In sum, all texts quoted so far (Patañjali, Manu, *MBh.*) have brahmin authors or have been redacted by brahmins. They agree in many details and they all are concerned with proper (brahmin) behavior, and the preservation of Sanskrit and the Vedas. In doing so, they set clear geographical and behavioral boundaries vis-à-vis the foreign "Outsiders" and the internal "Others" of the lower castes. Not surprisingly, much of their project reads like the program of modern Hindutva proponents and activists.

Much of the program can be seen as a reaction to the multifarious influences that had penetrated late Vedic and post-Vedic India, ever since the Persian occupation of the northwest, the Panjab and Sindh. One notices a desire to return to the firm values of a rather distant past, of a restoration of *dharma* and of a polity without foreign intervention and influences. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* this takes, unsurprisingly, the form of a golden age of Rāma (note, again, today's Hindutva irredenta and its *Rām Rāj* fantasies).[112] However, now and then it is visible that the social realities "on the ground" were different from the norm that brahmin-dominated texts such as the *Manusmṛti* want us to believe.

The *Gītā*

The *Gītā*, whose later layers[113] teach the trusting love of Kṛṣṇa, likewise is a reaction to the centuries of Buddhist, Jaina, and other ascetics's praise for *ahiṃsā*, promoting "sacrifice" and offerings without violence, teaching the avoidance of all actions that may produce detrimental affects for one's *karma*. In contrast, the first two chapters of the *Gītā* are an undisguised appeal to Arjuna to carry out his *varṇa* obligation as a nobleman and warrior. Objections that stress the bad karmic effects of such acts are dismissed: one can carry out fighting and killing—even one's own relatives—without personal "attachment," and thus escape the karmic consequences. This is a sophistic twist intended for noblemen and soldiers, not seen since the teaching of some of the sophistic "philosophers" of the time of the Buddha (*Dīghanikāya* 2). The new karmayogic attitude would indeed have fit well a person such as the brahmin general (*senāpati*) Puṣyamitra who killed the last Maurya king and usurped the throne: he would have done so without attachment, just for the dharmic benefit of the realm. As indicated, he restored (perceived) "Vedic" values. A similar social and religious background can also be assumed for large parts of the *Mahābhārata*.

110 See n. 109. Due to the desiccation of the Sarasvatī and the neglect of the distant Kubhā (Kabul river), the Ṛgvedic land of the "Seven Rivers" (*ṚV sapta sindhavaḥ*, Avestan *hapta həndauuō*) appears, for the first time, as *pañcanada*, the "(country) of the five streams" (*MBh* 2.29, 16.8.43), which corresponds to the (later) Persian designation panj-āb, not that of the Ṛgvedic and Avestan "Seven Streams."

111 Their descent is given at *MBh* 1.80.26: *yados tu yādavā jātās turvasor yavanāḥ sutāh | druhyor api sutā bhojā anos tu mlecchajātayḥ.*

112 See Witzel 2005a.

113 See the detailed study by M. Ježić (1986) on the layering in the *Gītā*.

SOCIAL REALITY: CLASSES, GUILDS, AND "CASTES"

The social conditions, however, can be checked to some extent by using other available data, that allow us to approach social reality more closely. One way to proceed would be to use the voluminous Buddhist and Jaina texts that frequently do not promote the same ideals as the Brahmanical texts. This giant task cannot be taken up in the present, limited context. However, there are some other, nonpolemical sources,[114] such as the inscriptions set up by donors of various sects who merely record their gifts and some of their social background. This kind of comparison has rarely been undertaken; worse, many inscriptions of this period have not been properly (re)edited and even fewer have been collected in useful volumes such as that of the Mathurā inscriptions by H. Lüders.

HERODOTOS'S Egypt	MEGASTHENES'S India	Manu, etc.
1. priests	1. philosophers	1. Brāhmaṇa
2. warriors	5. soldier	2. Kṣatriya
3. cattle herders	2. farmers	} 3. Vaiśya
4. pig herders	3. herders	
5. merchants	4. merchants & craftsmen	4. Śūdra
6. interpreters	6. supervisors & spies	—
7. revenue officers	7. officials & ministers	—

First in historical order, however, comes the report by an outside observer:[115] Megasthenes, the Seleucid ambassador in Patna (circa 300 BCE). According to the large sections preserved in Arrian's *Indikā*, Megasthenes reported on what he saw and learned about the social structure of the Maurya realm. Differently from what one would expect based on Brahmanical sources, he speaks of seven, not four classes (see Falk 1986) That kind of division, however, was a *topos* that he took over[116] from Herodotos's description of Egypt (*Histories* 2.164) whose seven classes are the priests, warriors, cattle and pig herders, merchants, interpreters, and revenue officers. In Megasthenes's *Indikā* we find philosophers, farmers, herders, merchants and craftsmen, soldiers, supervisors and spies, and finally the officials and ministers of the king.[117] Megasthenes's philosophers correspond to the brahmins, the soldiers and some high officials to the noblemen (kṣatriya), the herders and merchants more or less

114 Both Buddhist and Jaina texts can be read for their "incidental" descriptions or mentioning of social facts, when they do not discuss them as a topic of polemics or comment but as an aside or simile.

115 Note that Herodotos recorded in his three sections on India only items known to him from hearsay, including his "gold-digging ants" (see above n. 22), and other Persian reports such as the *Indikā* of Ctesias (415–398 BCE), the long-time physician of the Persian king Artaxerxes, were regarded in *Antiquity* as fantastic (see Blum 1836 and Gilmore 1888; see Pausanias, *Hist. of Greece*, 9.21.1).

116 As far as I see, not noticed so far.

117 Reminding of the Confucian organization of society.

to the vaiśya, and the farmers, craftsmen and spies to the śūdra of the Vedic texts and the Law books. Yet, an exact agreement of these classifications cannot be attained.[118] Though Megasthenes's classification was affected by that found in the traditional Greek texts, he obviously reported a division of labor that was closer to social reality.

We can also countercheck on this in a (partially) contemporary text, Kauṭilya's handbook on statecraft, the *Arthaśāstra*. However, it is typical that his classification of children born from mixed castes closely follows that of Manu; it ranks the children of a brahmin with vaiśya or śūdra women quite low.[119] The question is how to date these sections: the *Arthaśāstra*, as a whole, unfortunately cannot be dated as well as Patañjali. Its author Kauṭilya is supposed to have been an advisor to Candragupta Maurya (thus, circa 300 BCE), however many sections of his work do not fit such a time frame[120] and are thought to have been added well into the first century CE.[121] He even quotes "himself" several times, which points to a school of thought going under his name.[122] However, it is important that many data from the work agree with those provided by Megasthenes, which underlines the trustworthiness of both texts. An early date for the core of the text is indicated by the choice of loan words found in the *Arthaśāstra*. For example, the Greek word *syrinx* has been taken over as a military technical term, in the sense of "tunnel dug [during sieges] under a fortification"—while *cīnapaṭṭa* "Chinese cloth = silk" is found only at the end of a section on cloth, as an afterthought and in a clearly additional sentence.

Kauṭilya also provides detailed information of a host of professions and guilds, which is confirmed by the inscriptions at Mathurā and elsewhere: we hear of wine sellers, artisans, merchants, etc. However, Kauṭilya's clear preference for brahmins is echoed both by Manu and the Śātavāhana inscriptions: Gautamīputra Śātavāhana furthered the economic and societal position of brahmins by donations of later groups of cattle and by land grants (see below above, n. 45) and claims to have put a stop to the "mixture of classes." Nevertheless Kauṭilya's practical attitude and his recognition of multiple occupations and their "castes" of artisans, etc. is echoed by inscriptions and

118 See Falk 1986, who understands them as tax classes.

119 Note the classification of sons as *anuloma*, *pratiloma*, and other when born from various inter-*varṇa* marriages, and as a result, belonging to various castes, *Arthaśāstra* 3.7.1sqq.

120 Other names of authors/compilers/redactors besides Kauṭilya include Cāṇakya, Viṣṇugupta, and unknown member(s) of Kauṭilya's school, see n. 122.

121 See the summary of recent research by Scharfe 1993. It should be observed that the *Arthaśāstra*'s principal thought of concentric, interacting polities (see n. 4) is one that fits both the pre- and post-Mauryan times, that of the originally "sixteen polities" of northern India and that of the reemerging tribes and states of post-Mauryan times. The use of the *mitra-amitra-mitra* system for dating the text to the Maurya period thus is quite limited; also, note the preceding late Vedic *rājan-pratirājan* scheme in *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* 12.19:115.18sqq.: *taṃ pratirājabhyāḥ prahiṇoti. sa yaḥ pratigṛhṇāti mitro ma iti taṃ veda. atha yo na pratigṛhṇāty amitro ma iti taṃ veda.*

122 The *Arthaśāstra* mentions some predecessors and opponents; there also are many "self-quotations" by the author, Kauṭilya. These must have been inserted by members of his school, a feature seen, just like the *(prati)pratirājan* scheme, earlier than Kauṭilya, in the late Vedic *BŚS* and in Manu, e.g., at 8.168: *manur abravīt*, 3.150, etc.

by other contemporary texts that speak of extensive specialization of the craftsmen: for example, the *Milindapañha* mentions dozens of occupations. This goes hand-in-hand with an "official" and orthodox classification of the artisans by "Law" books like the *Manu Smṛti*. One organized oneself increasingly in guilds *(nigama, śreṇī, sabhā)*. About twenty-five are known in the area of Mathurā, and in the western Deccan. They also served as banks, where private individuals could deposit money, and in exchange for which they expected free labor or interest. The guilds became so powerful that they could procure their own coins, from the Panjab up to west and central India or Benares. A guild was governed by a guild assembly that also decided on questions of local law. They were supported by the state, as Manu's law book shows. They gave, just like the kings, large gifts to religious organizations. Even the later "low"-positioned leather workers and smiths were founders of Buddhist or Jaina sacred places and monasteries. The guild members probably were, as later on, by and large, śūdras; but they were, to some extent, on an equal footing with the vaiśyas due to their economic success at that time.

It is a quite another question of how things may have looked in the countryside. The always conservative Manu and his successor Yājñavalkya (circa third century CE) prescribed, in their *smṛtis*, a strict separation of the vaiśya and śūdra classes. Just as in Kauṭilya's manual, punishments are strictly segregated according to the four *varṇa* (classes). A brahmin could not be killed, but the hand of a śūdra, who had attacked a brahmin, had to be cut off, likewise his tongue even if he just had spoken just one offense. To what extent such rules were ever implemented remains unclear. The Brahmanical writings were always prescriptive and often probably just wishful thinking of how an ideal society "between the empires" should be organized.

Such strict regulations must be seen as a reaction against the openness to the rest of the world which persisted at the time. In many areas of India, particularly in the northwest and up to Mathurā, further in the west, for instance up to Nasik, and in the commercial towns on the western and southern coasts, all kinds of foreigners had settled. They often are recognizable by their names: the Kṣatrapa by their Iranian names in *-pharna* (Iranian *farna*, transcribed in Greek as *-phernes*), or in Mathurā. While such foreigners were described by the epic and *smṛti* texts as barbarians (or sometimes as kṣatriyas), they were, in real life, important trade partners and they actively participated in public life. Sometimes they had "converted" to the local religion, i.e., they presented themselves as "Indians" and as worshipers of Viṣṇu, Śiva, or the Buddha,[123] exactly like the foreign kings. The epics and Manu therefore speak of them as "fallen" "kṣatriya" or "Vrātya." This has been, since Vedic times, a popular trick of classification and incorporation of the "Others" (especially those of eastern north India).

A large degree of openness toward foreigners and foreign influences was further promoted by Buddhism where (at least theoretically) class and caste differences did not

123 Note the distribution of the ashes of King Milinda like those of a real savior (*sōtēr*), echoing those of the Buddha; or Antialkidas and the Besnagar (= Vidiśā) Garuḍa pillar inscription by Heliodoros, ambassador of the Greek king Antialkidas of Taxila, which is dedicated to Vāsudeva, god of gods (*devadevasa*); he calls himself a *bhāgavata*; see Sircar 1965: 88sq. no. 2.

play a role. Indeed, many foreigners became at least nominal Buddhists, the best known among them is the Greek king Menandros (Milinda, circa 150 BCE), who portrayed the Buddha on his coins. Other converted Greeks gave donations to the Buddhist order. Under the Kushanas, Buddhism, though no longer under active state supervision as under Aśoka, again actively turned outward with its own missionary activities, e.g., to Central Asia and China, and in this way India developed new contacts, with many new ideas flowing in.

Among the Hindus, one hardly went that far. Since Vedic times, and until today, Hindus have shut themselves off from the "Outside" much more vigorously. That did not prevent, however, a certain amount of attraction of "Brahmanical" religion to foreigners living in India. Thus, Heliodoros of Taxila, the Greek envoy of the Graeco-Bactrian king Antialkidas, called himself a devotee of Viṣṇu, as he recorded on a column at Vidiśā (central India).

The Indian ethos of the time, thus, was much affected by meeting and confronting the Outside, so that, as a result, something completely new developed: a world-open early "Hinduism," that maintained relationships with all its neighbors. Although at least the brahmins had constantly stressed, since Vedic times, their purity requirements, they now traveled to the forbidden neighboring territories of north India and beyond: they moved, like other classes, to south India and even across the feared and shunned ocean, up to Egypt and to Southeast Asia, and settled in these places.

The later part of the period between the empires cannot be dealt with here in detail: many of the early texts after circa 150 BCE cannot be included—for want of space; this would lead too far. The few excerpts quoted above from the *Mahābhārata*, Manu, *Arthaśāstra*, and the *Milindapañha* are from texts that are stratified and have later additions; however, they indicate that the process, delineated above, continued. It is interesting to take a brief look at the "final" and decisive reactions to the half millennium of outside invasions, interventions, influences, and trade, and try to discern how the emerging Gupta realm and its elite dealt with it: the "opening of the Indian mind" of the five hundred years between the empires was followed by a considerable "closing of the Indian mind" under the Guptas.

THE GUPTA SYNTHESIS: SELF-REFLECTION AND EMERGENCE OF A NEW CULTURE

Coming from an obscure background, the Guptas began to establish themselves as a new ruling family in Magadha around circa 300 CE. Candragupta I (approximately 320–325), the first important ruler, still sought to legitimize himself by marrying a "Licchavi princess" and proudly reported this in an inscription. Candragupta thereby connected himself with an old tradition going back to Buddha's time. Perhaps he even took over his throne name, Candragupta, from that of the famous Maurya ruler Candragupta Maurya. His striving for legitimacy also becomes clear in his choice of

titles.[124] He is a *mahārājādhirāja, a* "high king of great kings"! His successors called themselves *parameśvara*,[125] *paramabhaṭṭaraka*, or *cakarvartin*,[126] expressing dominance over various subordinated rulers whom Samudragupta lists in his Allahabad inscription.

Striving for legitimacy is also visible in the court literature of the period. Kālidāsa's drama "The Raghu lineage" (*Raghuvaṃśa*) offers the mythical prehistory of the Ikṣvāku, and concomitantly, of the Gupta family. His drama "The birth of the (God) Kumāra" (*KumārasaMBhava*, i.e., of the son of Shiva) is an only superficially camouflaged allusion to the birth of Kumāragupta (415), the son of Candragupta II, who called himself Vikramāditya. "Vikrama" points to Viṣṇu, who victoriously crossed all worlds with his three large strides—something Candragupta apparently hoped for as well.

On the other hand, the designation *āditya* indicates the fact that the royal family traced back their lineage (as in the epic) via Raghu to Manu, the son of the sun god Āditya (Mārtāṇḍa, Visvasvant). Kālidāsa's dramatic narration thus is, at the same time, an over-long panegyric of the Gupta Dynasty itself. One can observe how "all fits beautifully": the king is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, a descendant of the gods, and he lets himself be celebrated as a god.[127]

Proper descent from an old line of noblemen and kings has always been important. However, against the contemporary background sketched above, the testimony of the Purāṇas can be reevaluated. As they end with the Guptas,[128] this new class of (quasi-popular) Sanskrit texts was clearly developed in the Gupta period from earlier prototypes, such as the *MBh*/*Rām* and the intermediary *Harivaṃśa*. The stress in the Purāṇas, just as in the *Rām*, is on the descent of the kings of the east of northern India, rather than that of the west.[129] They describe, as "prophecies" but, in reality,

124 Older titles include: Vedic *rājan*, early post-Maurya: *rājātirāja* derived from the traditional Iranian "king of kings" (attested from Darius, 519 BCE, onward); the Kushanas add: *devaputra* (from China), *ṣahi* (from Iranian *šah*).

125 However, already used by Rudradāman; see Sircar 1965: 88 n. 4.

126 Going back to early Buddhist ideas, see also Maitreyī Upaniṣad, *MBh*. 3.188.91: *sa dharmavijayī rājā cakravartī bhaviṣyati*, etc.; see Tambiah 1987.

127 In the Kathmandu valley, the Licchavi kings (circa 400–750 CE) dwelled in the center between four Viṣṇus, represented by four large statues in the four corners of the valley.

128 With occasional exceptions such as the late Licchavi kings (circa 400–750 CE sqq.) in the post-Licchavi Buddhist text *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, or the constantly updated *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* whose nineteenth-century printing has queen Vaktāvatī of Laṇḍana.

129 See the two archetypes established by Kirfel (1927). There is constant struggle in these texts between the well-known real geography of the period between the empires and the mythical and religious one (see Kirfel 1920); a similar case is that of a more or less contemporary Iranian text, the *Bundahišn*, where the real world (with the new nomadic power, the Turks) is constantly intermingled with Avestan myth (about "Turān," cf. the Avestan Tūra, Sairima, Sāina, Dāneha Yt. 13.143–145). Thus, we have the real mountains and rivers of India, but also (the puranic and Patañjali's) seven mythical continents (which, incidentally, reflects an old Ṛgvedic and Old Iranian concept, see Witzel 2000).

using local bardic traditions, the various north Indian dynasties, e.g., since Nanda times and establish, just as in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, a link between the eastern kings such as the Gupta, with Rāma, his ancestor Raghu, the (Ṛgvedic) Ikṣvāku, Manu, and the sun god (Vivasvant, Sūrya). Therefore, the Ikṣvāku-Raghu Dynasty belongs to the "sun lineages" (*sūryavaṃśa*).[130] All of this can be traced back to the Late Vedic period and beyond.[131]

As mentioned above, the kings from now on[132] regarded themselves as a (partial) incarnation of Viṣṇu. The older ritual identification was one with Indra, the king of the gods, who not only protected his "subjects" but also made the present world inhabitable (as *oikumene*). This was expressed in early Vedic ritual during the royal installation. The chieftain or "king" imitated the upright-standing Indra, who had lifted up the sky and had thus created space for humans on earth. The strength necessary for this was provided by a ritual unction with water, including exactly as in Byzantium and the European west anointing his forehead.[133]

However, in the puranic[134] and other texts emerging now the king is ritually identified with Viṣṇu. The new ritual clearly shows this identification, body part by body part, in its central actions (Witzel 1987b). The king now is a "walking Viṣṇu," as is still the case with the kings of Nepal or of Puri in Orissa.[135] Adding such features, the puranic "coronation ritual" no longer is a simple unction but actually makes use of a gold band or even a proper crown, following earlier Greek and Iranian models.

Several of the new concepts had been prepared by the Kushana and Greeks. The Greek kings of the Panjab called themselves *sotēr* "rescuer, savior," and the Kushanas, probably following Chinese models known to them from Central Asia, called themselves *devaputra* "god's (or gods') son." Further, the Roman emperors, with whom the Kushanas had close commercial contacts, were worshiped as gods after their death—exactly the opposite is done by later Indian kings!—and their statues were set up for worship. It perhaps not surprising that the Kushana set up such royal statues in their own temples (Taxt-i Sulaiman, Mathurā). Such concepts were, to certain extent, "in the air" and were gladly taken up by the Guptas. Only they were so completely Indianized that a casual observer would not recognize their foreign origin. In addition, a solid ideological and religious *überbau* was created in the Purāṇas and celebrated by Kālidāsa.

This selection of developments is just a small indication of the more general trend. After centuries of foreign rule and of an enormous openness toward the international, outside world, under the Greeks, Śaka, and Kushana, some "national reflection" about the "things typically Indian" took place under the Guptas (320 CE). Interestingly, this was again parallel to what was happening in neighboring Iran, where the Hellenistically oriented Arsacide Dynasty had been replaced, slightly earlier (250 CE), by the nationalistic Zoroastrian-oriented Sasanids.

In the Gupta realm, traditional art, religion, literature, and above all, traditional values in social order were stressed, even if such values had changed greatly in the course of the preceding centuries, something that latter day people were not always conscious of. Gupta culture is not simply an exact "copy" of the Nanda period or of the Maurya period.[136] As much as the Guptas strove to connect with the past, e.g., Samudragupta[137] by celebrating, just like Puṣyamitra, a large horse sacrifice, they could not simply push aside centuries of religious and social development. Therefore there was no Gupta promotion of the well-known Vedic gods, but of the great "new" gods such as Viṣṇu or Śiva. Likewise, they did not utilize the pictureless and templeless ritual of Vedic times, but they consciously promoted the building of temples and the plastic art, both of which could be used for royal representation.

Besides such revivals and some not very obvious "Indianization" of foreign

130 However, in Kurukṣetra and in the *Mahābhārata*, one did not follow this genealogy but the older version, which retraced the Kurus to the Bharata, to Manu's son Purūravas and Manu's daughter Ilā. However, differently from the Veda, one placed the moon (Soma) as ultimate ancestor at the beginning of the list and therefore created the Moon lineage (*somavaṃśa*), obviously in contrast to the Sun lineage (*sūryavaṃśa*).

131 The late Vedic Kauśāmbī- and Kāśi-centered narrations speak (especially in the initial portions of the *Vādhūla Brāhmaṇa*) of frequent primordial incest, such as seen in the descent from Manu of Ilā and Purūravas. In the end, these are measures by various local dynasties to effect legitimacy of descent. Some counterevidence is seen in the *Minlindapañha* and the *Buddhacarita*, but even the latter text exhibits many of the emerging ideas about the Raghu lineage.

132 See already Manu 7.4–8: partial, temporary, welfare-promoting incarnations of Viṣṇu, as *avatāras*, were frequent in the religion of the time (see Brockington 1998: 277–289, 444–445).

133 See Witzel 1987b.

134 The older Purāṇas (two basic versions reconstructed in *Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa*, Kirfel 1927) can be internally dated to the beginning of the Gupta period (circa 320 CE+); they exhibit the new mythology with Viṣṇu and Śiva, the formalization of *avatāras* (see Brockington 1998: 275, 277–289), an increasing syncretism of local deities, a newly crystallized form of worship (formal *pūjā*, whose history still needs to be written), and a new coronation ritual (Witzel 1987b) based on the identification of the king with Viṣṇu. The same royal focus is evident in the new ornate poetry that built on the developments of the age between the realms (Aśvaghoṣa, Bhāsa, etc.): some of Kālidāsa's dramas glorify the history of the Gupta lineage. Further, new forms of art emerge: the Hellenistic Gandhāra or the Mathurā styles are replaced, and temple building, with grand statues of Viṣṇu, etc., emerges. This brief survey could be extended to many other fields, such as law (*Yājñavalkya Smṛti*—named after a famous eastern philosopher—that summarized and soon overshadowed Manu), philosophy or the sciences, with new, frequently foundational texts: such as astronomy (*Siddhāntas* and Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 550 CE, that incorporated the Babylonian/Greek systems, as also in Iran); or grammar with the reformulation of Pāṇini by Candra and in the Kātantra—and many others.

135 This development also had an effect on Southeast Asia, where approximately at the same time Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced, and where an even more outstanding position of the king appeared; see Kulke 1978.

136 If one disregards, for argument's sake, some of the more typically Buddhist traits of Mauryan times.

137 Which was repeated, in the Hindutva-charged atmosphere of the year 2002, with the sacrifice of ten horses in central India.

influences, there also is a clear demarcation of the things "foreign" and of the Other.[138] The Central Asian style of clothing of the Kushana, with trousers and heavy boots, was no longer fashionable. Instead, one returned to the flowing garbs that are much better adapted to the hot and humid Indian climate. Gupta coins no longer followed Greek or Roman models, and the inscriptions were written in the typical Brāhmī-derived Gupta script and only in Sanskrit, but no longer in the languages and scripts of the northwest. Such inscriptions often exhibit an emblematic figure, such as the disc of Viṣṇu or Śiva's bull Nandi on their top section, clearly referring to the prevailing religion.[139] Brahmins, too, were preferred and promoted. In a unique combination of religious and political acumen, the issue of land grants to brahmins, begun by the Śātavāhanas, was considerably increased.[140] These donations, engraved on copper plates, replaced the donations of hundreds or thousands of cattle that were still used by the Śātavāhana. In a grant, an introduction (*praśasti*) composed in highly poetical Sanskrit covered the genealogy of the dynasty and the (alleged) the heroic war exploits of the king; this was followed by the operational part with the actual land donation, in which the names, clan, Veda study, earlier residence, etc., of the donee brahmins were mentioned. Such donations often served—as can be seen under the Hun king Mihirakula—as legitimization, which the early Guptas clearly were in need of.

Here, a common practice of the Middle Ages first appears when Gautamīputra forbids his officials to interfere in the administration of such donated landholdings. The owners alone were responsible and thus became increasingly autonomous. The idea underlying land donations was to make underdeveloped areas accessible to organized agriculture and tax revenue and to change from slash-and-burn agriculture of the original populations. This was the case during the whole of the Middle Ages and well into the British period, as seen for example in the state Mayurbhanj in north Orissa even in modern times. All brahmin villages (*śāsana*) are arranged strategically in form of a ring around the central mountains of this small kingdom, and two more villages are found in the only wide mountain valley. In this way the Śātavāhana, too, succeeded in opening up many new areas, such as those around Nasik and in the upper Krishna valley. Apart from such state projects, it was private or village initiative that procured new land by clear-cut removal of thorn shrubs. Whoever made a piece country arable first, to him it belonged.

In closely observing the developments of the period between the empires, a general formula can be derived that explains Indian reactions to outside influences. The process has often been repeated, well into the British period. So far, one has attributed it to the "additive" state of mind and to the "all-devouring" inclusivistic character of

138 And, in a certain sense, also of Buddhism.

139 Although Buddhism was promoted, likewise, by donations it is only comparatively little represented, since it was more appropriate for the role of the king to present himself as a Hindu (god). Later on, in some forms of Buddhism, kings are seen as "incarnations" of bodhisattvas, still celebrated every twelve years in the Samyakpūjā of Nepal, such as in January 2005.

140 However, there were also many donations for Buddhist or Jaina institutions, see already those of the Śātavāhanas, see above n. 57.

Hinduism (P. Hacker).[141] This is, however, not correct if voiced in such abstract terms. Rather, something quite different appears from a study of the period between the empires. One may regard the whole period between the empires—just like the current period from circa1820/50 CE onward—as a process of Brahmanical reaction, with stress on "Indianness," and as a retrograde reflection on native customs and Vedic religion. Even though the characteristics of the new "classical" Gupta culture, because of its syncretistic nature, no longer reflected closely that of the preceding periods, this feature usually escaped (and still escapes) contemporary observers.[142]

One may thus generalize such observations and use them in evaluating much of later Indian history. We then can recognize a constant ebb and flow, a period of strong external influence followed by an often virulent reaction, in which the influences were processed. Usually, they were followed a third, more or less "Classical" period, in which some these influences were taken up and combined with parts of the older "status kit" (Ehret) into something completely new and different.

The newly emerging culture appeared to the contemporaries and to their later descendants as "classically beautiful." This appeared so because such "Classical" periods (Middle Vedic; Maurya, Gupta, Cola, Pāla-Sena, Vijayanagara, Moghul realms) possessed a generally recognized canon of forms, extending to all aspects of culture. The canon permitted much improvization within a rather strict framework.

We can observe the same type of self-reflection that was seen under the Guptas also today, after many centuries of Islamic and British rule. We live in the later phase of reactions to yet another Outsider, the "West," a reaction that began around 1820/50 with the reformist Brahmo and Arya Samaj and that has recently reached egregious levels, both in local happenings and in government measures.[143] However, keeping in mind the 500 years of changes, reflection, and fermentation between the Maurya and the Gupta empires, we may hope (now, with some justification, as the recent elections have shown) for a dispassionate, well-balanced new synthesis, a new flowering of Indian culture, perhaps one not unlike that of the Guptas.

Keeping in mind the history of India, we may look forward to the India of the twenty-first century—with anticipation.

141 Hacker's "inclusivism," for which see the discussion in G. Oberhammer 1983.

142 Indology, however, can observe and determine such characteristics as long as it works on a philological basis and keeps its outlook open to all relevant aspects of Indian culture; see Witzel 1997: v.

143 Recent discussions (since circa 1980) in Indian publications, in the press, and especially on the internet, have taken a rather scathing and sometime violent tone. Due to strict adherence to the Savarkar-Golwalkar credo of "one country, one people, one culture," they have led to a wholesale rejection of "western" (i.e. international) scholarship in a number of fields of the humanities, especially in history and classical Indology; see Witzel 2005a.

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